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ANNE KESLER SHIELDS

A RETROSPECTIVE

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ANNE KESLER SHIELDS

A RETROSPECTIVE

Curated by Tom Patterson

SOUTHEASTERN CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART



Five Self-Portraits. 1990, Oil on Canvas



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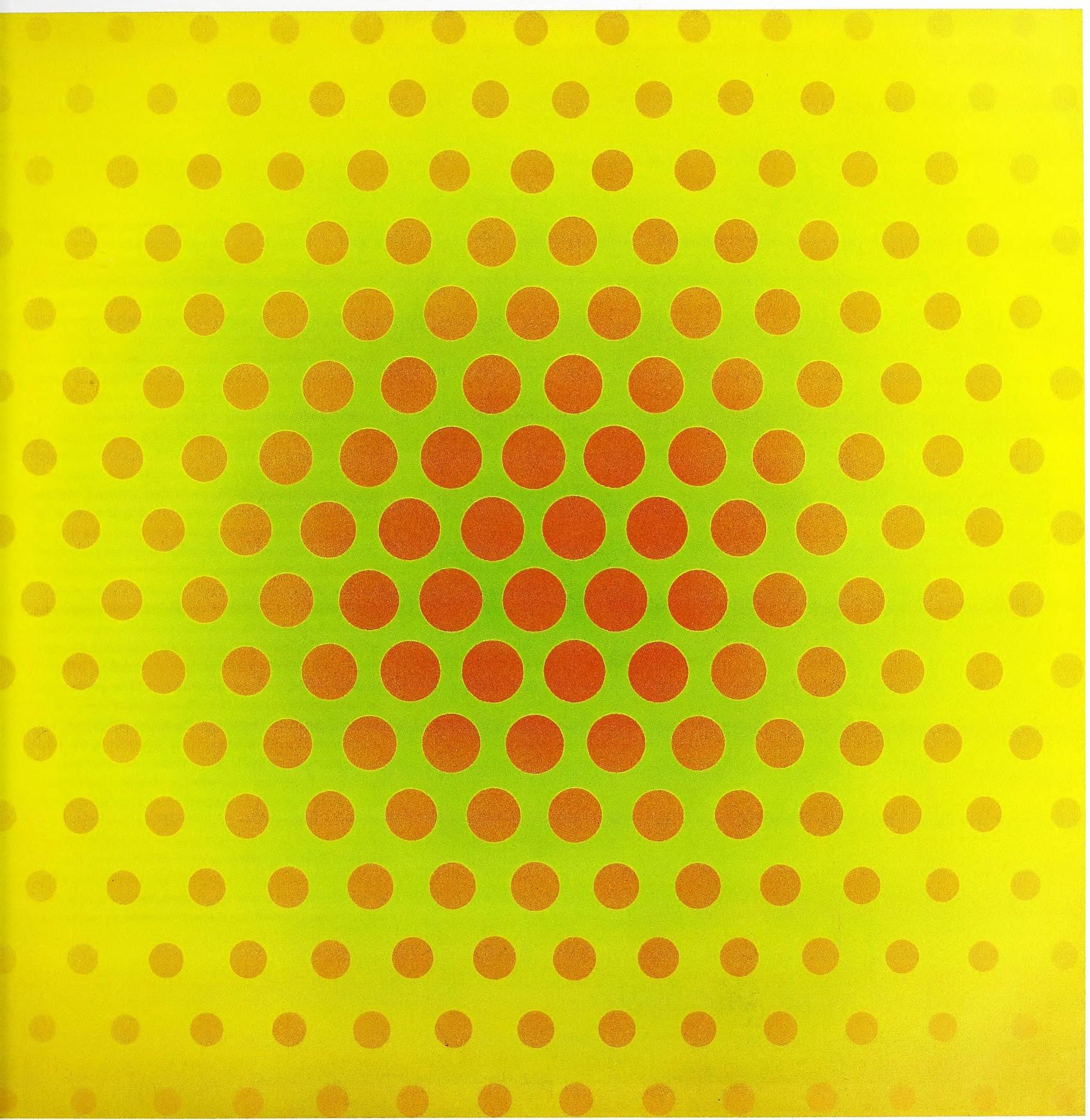
FOREWORD

MARK RICHARD LEACH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is an honor for the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art to present the work of Anne Kesler Shields. Over her fruitful and imaginative career, Shields has developed artworks both diverse and robust. The prodigious and storied journey chronicled in this career retrospective is truly worthy of admiration—on the part of those who've known her for decades, as well as those who will become newly acquainted with this artist's work. Shields is also a life-long advocate for the arts, and her community involvement has led to the establishment of important Winston-Salem cultural institutions. Through her efforts and those of her friends, Associated Artists was born in 1956. Interestingly, during the same year, Shields and many of her colleagues gave rise to the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts, now known as SECCA. There she participated as a board member for over five years, working with fellow trustees to guide the Gallery's seminal development. She was an instrumental figure in the genesis of our organization, and we are proud to celebrate her contributions to the cultural landscape of this city.

For more than fifty-six years, SECCA has been at the forefront of charting, engaging and interpreting the emergence of important young artists and innovative trends in contemporary art. At times and when circumstances have warranted, the art center has undertaken - with significant effort - the study of individual artists and their life's work. Such is the case with *Anne Kesler Shields: A Fifty-Year Retrospective*. To best measure the expansive trajectory of her accomplishments, a curatorial perspective with parallel history in North Carolina was needed. Critic, writer and curator Tom Patterson provides this considered insight, having followed the artist's development since his arrival in Winston-Salem in 1984. He has worked closely with the artist to shape an exhibition that richly surveys a diverse, courageous, conceptually broad and inventive career. Patterson has written for the *Winston-Salem Journal* since 1988, and has also covered the arts in Charlotte and Asheville, and we thank him for working with SECCA to collectively author this latest story with your support: our audience, community and partners.

SECCA is grateful to the many patrons of the artist who have lent important works from their personal collections. Without them, illustrating the artist's creative trajectory would have been nearly impossible. We also greatly appreciate the many generous financial contributions made in the artist's honor to support the publication of the exhibition's accompanying catalog. On behalf of Secretary for Cultural Resources Linda Carlisle and the many employees of the Department who have supported SECCA and its cultural work, we express our deepest gratitude to Anne Kesler Shields. Her creative work over a highly successful career has been an inspiration to many. Closer to home, the staff of the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and the SECCA Foundation take great pride in the presentation of this exhibition to the citizens of North Carolina and beyond.



INTRODUCTION

STEVEN MATIJCIO
CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Recalling one of the early, but no less formative periods in the career of Anne Kesler Shields, exhibition curator Tom Patterson presciently describes how she—in keeping with her then teacher Hans Hofmann’s “push-and-pull” technique—created “transitional paintings [which] have multiple centers of energy that compete for visual attention.” In the fifty-some years that have followed those watershed canvases, Shields has regularly populated her practice—and the colorful, if conflicted artistic landscape of the southeast—with multiple *genres* of energy that continue to swirl, resonate, and resist uniform definition. As a singular artist outside a singular path, she has embraced (and animated) a kaleidoscopic career: traveling in multiple directions with a keen sense of mapping, but nary a straight line. In an exhibition that provides the unique opportunity to reflect upon her artistic life to date, we observe a woman who habitually transgresses the boxes that convention and etiquette impose. Responding intently to both opportunities and obstructions, Shields has translated the lessons of her teachers (and times) into an agile, inquisitive approach responsive to the life and legacy of images. Across the aesthetic and conceptual spectrum, one can see the various phases of her practice like the many panels that make up her photo collages—as simultaneous centers of energy that glimmer like the stars of a curious constellation. Just as Shields convenes a chorus of distinct, yet interconnected voices in these works, this show traces her circuitous path through portraiture, expressionism, landscape, drawing, geometric abstraction, design, collage, architecture, appropriation, assemblage and pointed political subject matter. Through it all, this artist bravely eschews the seductive call of/for a signature aesthetic—embracing the chameleon, inhabiting the transitions, and mining the in-between.

As much about content as connective tissue, Shields has always been fascinated with, and driven by how things relate. Prioritizing the enterprise over the individual, she seeks, suggests and exposes the nascent threads that wind through our vast visual landscape. In so doing—carving revelatory paths through the dense retinal clutter that has accumulated over the centuries—Shields’ pursuit of archetypal patterns has lifted her work into archetypal status. Serving as a model from which succeeding generations will learn and grow, her practice (and presence) have been especially important in the consideration of women and image culture. Analyzing gender relations from the origins of art history to the now of 21st-century media, Shields has never shied from shaking up southern decorum or challenging patriarchal convention. In the process—traversing the often-taboo thematic terrain of sex, war, religion and politics—her work has catalyzed difficult, and much-needed debate. If her generation was once dismissively “called ‘the

silent one,’ Shields’ work has,” in the wise appraisal of a Hollins University classmate, “consistently managed to speak out on social issues with a well-educated southern woman’s firm voice.” As a burr in the long male-dominated territories of abstract art and southern culture, Shields forges a space where her words and those of other strong women could gather, congregate, and build critical mass. Selflessly cultivating the greater ecology of art and agency, Shields has also played a key role in the formation of Winston-Salem based organizations such as Associated Artists, The Five Winston-Salem Printmakers, the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and the Artworks co-op. In so doing—interconnecting multiple individuals (of energy) into synergies greater than the sum of their parts—she transcends the object to live and breathe cartographies that span centuries.

As a tireless student—and scrutinizer—of art and its history, Shields has become fluent in a language she simultaneously speaks and skews. From the classic to the contemporary; Winston-Salem to the world; the scale and substance of her work strive toward “the epic,” even as her practice questions the foundations/formula of the canon. From expressionist renderings of nature and geometric translations of the city to assemblage portraits and appropriations of appropriations (in the interdependent worlds of fashion, advertising and print), every piece acknowledges—and problematizes—its place in the continuum of image culture. Shields respectfully but insistently challenges the codes perpetrated, and perpetuated, in art and industry—tracing the echo/iterations of posture, gesture, color, form and composition as they reverberate over time. With allegiances to all and none, she is a reminder in a short-term memory society, and an interruption in the waning of affect. Speaking to the underlying, illuminating interstices between ostensibly

disparate events, curator Melissa G. Post highlights how Shields reconnects the history of representation, “in ways that re-interpret the past, re-contextualize the present, and help define the future.” She does so, and has done so for over a half-century, from the inside; from within; forgoing the spotlight to work as a lens.

Through that seasoned lens, through her expansive practice and prodigious curiosity—gathering more insight and depth with every added day—we are able to better see ourselves, and our place in this world. That mirror has only grown richer with time: demonstrating increasing, and thoroughly inspiring dimensions of courage, confidence and ambition in a life and practice entwined. This exhibition celebrates that path and every center of energy borne along the way, by an artist rightfully lauded by curator Tom Patterson for her formidable versatility and impressive aesthetic agility. In concert with Salem College and Wake Forest University, this 50-year retrospective of Anne Kesler Shields provides the unparalleled platform to reflect upon her prismatic body of work through a holistic lens. As one kaleidoscopic confluence, this exhibition embodies the way Shields has always seen, conceived and shared her work. On the notable occasion of her 80th birthday, SECCA is proud and privileged to recognize a prolific career and a cornerstone of this community. We aim, as she has always done, to never stand still—to be vigilantly attuned to the currents around us; responsive to circumstance while striving to make it better; understanding the world through art, and through art, envisioning a more vibrant world.



THAT WHICH ALWAYS COMES FIRST

SIX DECADES OF ANNE KESLER SHIELDS' ART

TOM PATTERSON

Do you make art your life, that which always comes first and occupies every moment, the last problem before sleep and the first awaking vision? —David Smith, question #1 of 46

A VITAL CAREER

A discerning eye, a skilled hand, an abiding interest in form, a broad knowledge of art history, an incisive critical intellect, an insatiable appetite for visual stimulation, an almost obsessive ability to explore variations on a theme, and relentlessly steady work habits—these are the virtues that Anne Kesler Shields has brought to her art practice for more than 50 years. She has also brought an unerring sense of poetic elegance to everything she's made. A review of her creative output reveals the broad variety of techniques, aesthetic approaches, subject categories, and themes she has managed to engage in her years of art-making. Her method typically involves working within pre-established limits for each project she undertakes. Eschewing a signature style or type of work, she has continually sought new ideas and fresh approaches in an ongoing process of exploration, discovery, critical evaluation, and revitalization.

Throughout her career Shields' parallel interests in architecture and photography have influenced her art practice, as exemplified by her urban wall designs from the 1970s, and her more recent appropriated-image installations. She was only 15 when she learned how to use a camera and set up her own darkroom, and at 20 she seriously thought about pursuing a career in architecture. Her father Jack Kesler, a professional homebuilder and a self-taught architect, designed several of the houses he built (including the Keslers' family home in Winston-Salem). She shared his interest in building design, and her interest was amplified by a modern-architecture seminar she attended as a sophomore art major at Hollins College, which introduced her to the work of Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Philip Johnson. It prompted her to consider transferring to North Carolina State University to major in architecture, not an option at Hollins. When she visited the university, however, the dean of its school of design told her women didn't make good architects, and she returned to Hollins, graduating in 1954 with a degree in art.

In the ensuing years, Shields has maintained a disciplined, continually experimental involvement with her art from one project to another. While our focus here is on her work and its development, her successful balance of an active art career with a busy family life makes for a remarkable story in its own right.¹

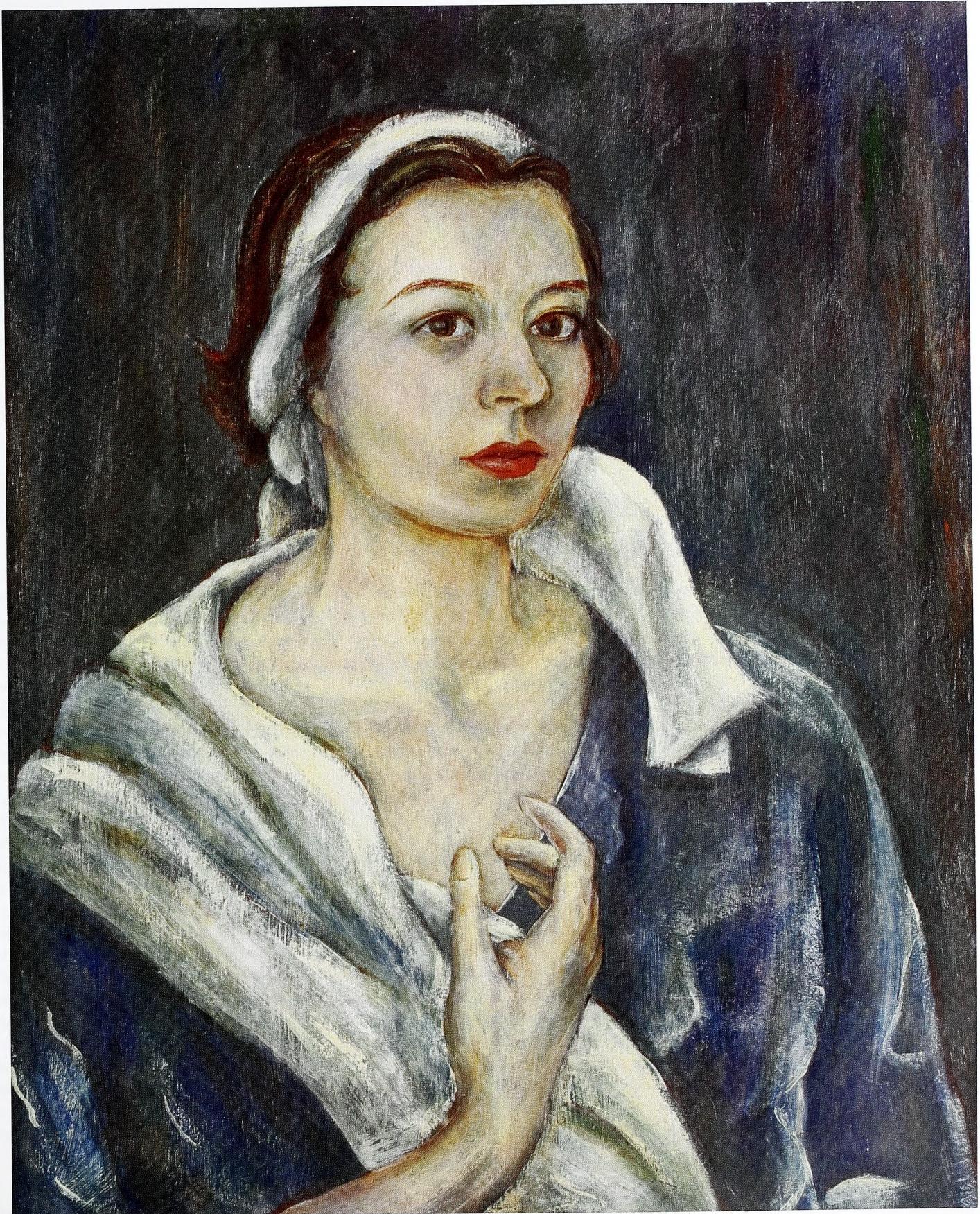
I became aware of Shields' work in the late 1980s, soon after I moved to Winston-Salem and began writing about contemporary art in North Carolina. It was her experiments with portraiture that first caught my attention in several local exhibitions. My interest was further piqued by the appropriationist photocopy

murals she began making in the early 1990s. All I knew about her at the time was that she was a successful portrait painter of about sixty. From my perspective, the large, provocative photocopy collages seemed to come out of left field. Unlike portraits they had no commodity value, since they were temporary and disposable, and yet they were directly, critically engaged with commercial culture, since much of their imagery came from fashion magazines and other popular print sources. Further, the photocopy pieces often highlighted images with a measure of shock value, virtually guaranteed to generate controversy at a time when the national culture war was still a fresh phenomenon. Controversy, in turn, brought attention to the timely social, political, and cultural issues Shields obviously intended to raise with these works. From that point on, I was eager to see what she would do next.

I had written reviews of Shields' exhibitions over several years before we were introduced by a mutual friend. Not long afterwards I conducted my first interview with her, in connection with *The Return of the Sabines*, her large photocopy mural commissioned by SECCA in 2000. In the following years I had additional discussions with her about her art and occasional opportunities to see works she had created before the 1980s. Growing awareness of the range, quantity and consistent quality of the art she has produced over the years led me to start thinking in terms of a retrospective exhibition that would span her entire career. Support from SECCA and invaluable collaborative input from its exhibitions curator Steven Matijcio have allowed that idea to become a reality. Timed to open in Shields' 80th year, this exhibition will draw more widespread attention to Shields' formidable record of artistic achievement, and emphasize her work's continuing relevance and vitality.

BEGINNINGS

As the only child of college-educated, upwardly mobile, middle-class parents, Shields was encouraged early on to develop her seemingly innate aptitude for drawing





and painting. There were no artists in her family, but her father and two of her mother's sisters had drawn or painted in their youth. Her mother's unmarried sister Carolyn Mercer took her on art-viewing trips to the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, and to museums in New York and Washington, D.C.

Shields' art training at Hollins followed a classical European model, encompassing regular sessions of anatomical sketching and technical instruction. She painted landscapes, still-lifes and portraits, and studied European art history. During a summer trip to New York she saw paintings by Matisse and Picasso, but she graduated from Hollins without any knowledge of contemporary art. This naiveté is indirectly revealed in a painting from 1953: a skillfully painted, psychologically complex self-portrait that reflects her maturing self-concept on the cusp of her adult life. The eyes look thoughtful and inquisitive, indicating alert attention as well as an openness to life and to art; but the painting bears little trace of formal invention or experimentation [CAT. NO. 1].

In 1954, after her graduation from Hollins and a summer trip to Europe with a student group, Shields returned to Winston-Salem. Setting up a studio in her family home, she continued her artistic pursuits. She sketched a variety of subjects from life, and she made several silkscreen and woodcut prints of buildings in Old Salem and on the original campus of Wake Forest College. She sold some of these in local venues, and she drew commissioned charcoal portraits of children, for 50 dollars each. Meanwhile, for her own purposes

she began experimenting with Modernist styles including Cubism and Surrealism.

During this period Shields met fellow artists Susan Moore and Anne Carter Pollard, who also lived in Winston-Salem. They were a few years older and worked in very different styles, but as consistently productive artists, they served as important examples for Shields. In 1956 the three of them joined forces with more than a dozen other local artists to arrange a group exhibition—an effort that led to the establishment of Associated Artists of Winston-Salem (an active presence on the city's art scene ever since). Soon afterward some of the same artists joined local art patrons to establish the gallery that eventually became SECCA, and Shields served on its original board of directors.²

BREAKTHROUGH

Philip Moose, a successful artist who lived in Hickory, North Carolina, visited Shields' studio in 1955. Impressed with her efforts, he suggested that she pursue more concentrated studies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine. Accepting the advice, she enrolled in classes there for the summer of 1956. At the Skowhegan School Shields made sketches of the Maine countryside and of her fellow students, and thrived under the guidance of instructors including Henry Varnum Poor, Edwin Dickinson, and Isabel Bishop. As the first nationally renowned woman artist Shields



met, Bishop served as an especially important example for her. She was also exposed to the ideas and techniques of visiting artists who lectured at the school, including sculptor David Smith and painter Richard Pousette-Dart.

Particularly influential on her was Smith's lecture, which posed 46 questions to the students. The first one: "Do you make art your life, that which always comes first and occupies every moment, the last problem before sleep and the first awaking vision?" Some of Smith's questions dealt with expenditures of time and money as reflections of life priorities, and others challenged the students to formulate coherent, defensible assessments of their own work. All were aimed at prompting them to honestly evaluate their commitment to their art and the depth of their critical thinking about it. Shields hand-copied Smith's questions, and they had an enduring impact on her practice and her ideas about her career.

Perhaps the most successful work Shields produced at Skowhegan was a long, horizontal painting of a reclining nude. Employing a range of greens and eliminating the head and feet, she treated the figure as if it were a landscape [CAT. NO. 2]. On the whole, she felt that her experience at the school amounted to a personal breakthrough. Having spent almost every waking hour either making art or talking about art, she returned to Winston-Salem transformed in her thinking and her priorities.

NEW HORIZONS (THE LATE 1950s)

Soon after her summer at Skowhegan, Shields began taking occasional graduate courses in the art department at "Woman's College," the state institution that would soon be renamed the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She also began aligning herself more closely with the art of her time. By 1956 the popular press had drawn public attention to Abstract Expressionism, and she was interested in learning more about it. One of her grad-school teachers, John Opper, was a practitioner of this loose, gestural mode of abstract painting, and an Abstract Expressionist exhibition she saw at the college had a strong effect on her. Shields noted in the show's accompanying text that several of the artists had studied with Hans Hofmann, credited as a seminal figure in the loosely defined movement. Eager to bring herself up to date, she decided to attend the Hofmann School of Fine Arts in Provincetown, Massachusetts during the summer of 1957—the last year Hofmann accepted new students.

In Provincetown that summer Shields was one of about 50 students working under Hofmann's guidance. This limited the amount of individual attention she received, but she felt that she learned from listening to his critiques of other students' work as well as her own. Ironically, she was heartened by his criticism that all her work looked too much alike, in that she had worried about it lacking a distinctive style or approach. A dynamic charcoal drawing from one of the summer's drawing classes combines her own rendering of a



seated figure with Hofmann's bold-stroked additions [CAT. NO. 4].

After returning to North Carolina, Shields taught painting and drawing at Salem College for three semesters, before deciding that teaching took too much time away from her art practice. Meanwhile, she continued work toward her MFA degree. Her studies with Hofmann had a pronounced impact on the work she produced through the end of the decade—abstract landscape paintings with passages of thick impasto and gestural markings typically surrounding flat, central voids [SEE CAT. NO. 3, 5]. In keeping with Hofmann's "push-and-pull" concept, these transitional paintings have multiple centers of energy that compete for visual attention. Under Hofmann's guidance, she has said, "I feel like I developed a sense of space. I started thinking of the whole two-dimensional area and began to repeat certain gestures and colors."³

Shields made two more summer trips to Europe between 1958 and 1960, traveling with fellow artists in both cases. They made sketches and looked at art, architecture, and the landscape in Spain, France and Italy. She was deeply affected by the Piero della Francesca paintings in several small Italian towns, and by Roman paintings from the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum (in the National Archeological Museum in Naples).

In 1960 Shields was awarded her MFA degree and became engaged to Howard Shields, a Wake Forest University physics professor she had known for two years. They were married in December,

but she didn't allow her new life as a young bride to sideline her art pursuits. While her husband attended to his classes and meetings, she regularly went to her studio and worked into the late afternoons. These sustained efforts yielded a substantial amount of work, including a number of large paintings and small woodcut prints, not to mention increasing numbers of the commissioned portraits she painted to earn money.

WORKING ARTIST (1960s)

Shields continued work on abstracted landscapes during the early 1960s, but her new efforts in this vein were more formally simplified than the expressionistic, textured abstractions of her graduate-school years. With their collapsed perspectives, contrasting colors, and simply rendered trees, leaves, blossoms, grain fields, landforms, clouds, and fallen snow, they are less derivative than her previous efforts, although she acknowledges that they owe a debt to Milton Avery. Some were inspired by her observations of the North Carolina landscape, while others are based on landscapes she had seen and sketched in Italy and Spain [SEE CAT. NO. 6-12]. Works from this period were included in juried and invitational group exhibitions at several museums in the Southeast.

By this time Shields had established a pattern of entering competitive shows and making other efforts to get her work seen by wider audiences. In late 1962 she and four other hometown artists—Mary Goslen, Virginia Ingram, and her friends Moore and Pollard—united to form the Five Winston-Salem Printmakers. They pooled their talents, ideas, and other resources to organize shows of their prints at college and university galleries around the Southeast over the next 20 years.⁴

In 1963 Shields learned of Josef Albers' newly published book "Interaction of Color." She was aware of Albers—who had been Sue Moore's teacher at Black Mountain College—and had seen examples of his work. She wasn't, however, familiar with his theories until she sought out this book, with its 150 color plates illustrating principles such as color relativity, intensity and temperature, and the illusions of transparency and reversed grounds.⁵ Stimulated intellectually as well as optically, Shields began to formulate her own experiments based on Albers' color theories. First she made small collages in which small dots hole-punched from brightly colored paper were painstakingly glued onto contrastingly painted sheets. By employing subtle chromatic gradations in the painted grounds, she

created the illusion that the dots varied in color when, in fact, they were identical. She then began painting and silkscreening gridded configurations of dots on contrasting grounds, to similar effect. This simple concept allowed for a myriad of variations, and the resultant body of work allowed her to create an easily remembered identity for herself. The striking, dot-patterned prints and paintings she made over the next five years attracted national attention, thanks in large part to their favorable reception by Associated American Artists Gallery in New York [CAT. NO. 13-18]. When the well-known gallery began representing these prints, it placed her in the company of Modernist luminaries including Ellsworth Kelly and Albers himself.

This period coincided with the advent of the term Op Art, popularized by the mass media as a shorthand designation for geometrically patterned abstraction exploiting optical effects (like those Albers discussed in his book). Although her dot compositions brought her national recognition and a measure of commercial success, she turned away from this body of work at the beginning of the 1970s. Feeling that she had exhausted her exploration of the interrelationships between dot patterns and grounds, Shields was ready to venture into new artistic terrain.

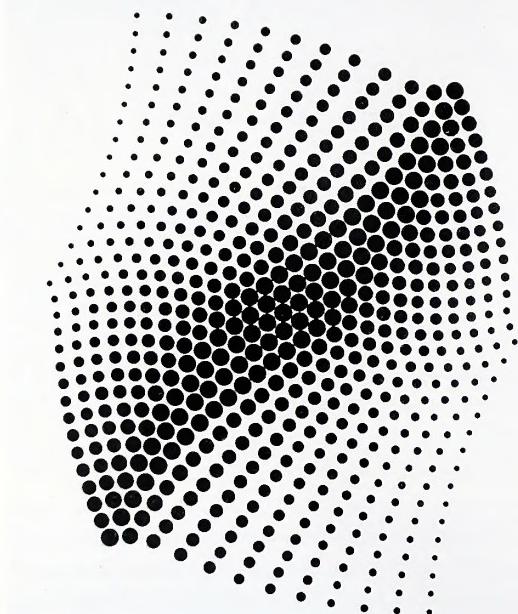
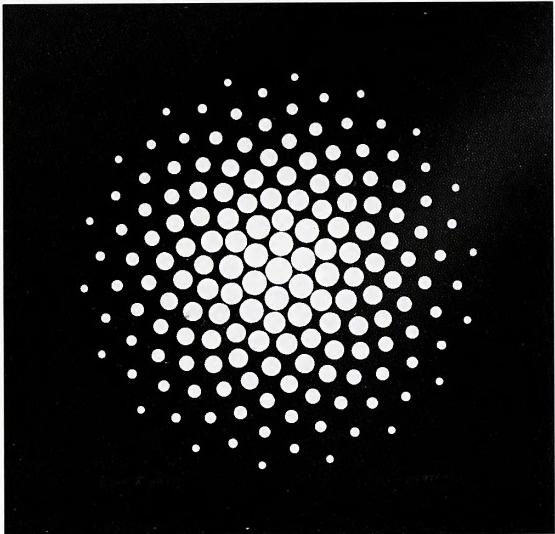
TRADEOFFS AND TRANSITIONS (1970s)

Between 1965 and 1971 Shields gave birth to her three children—Carolyn, Burton and John. Motherhood required a reordering of her priorities, but she was determined not to let it overwhelm her art practice. Because portrait commissions had always been a reliable means of generating income, she began devoting half of each year to them. This enabled her to spend the other half of the year on art projects, and to pay a housekeeper for year-round help with the children.

The 1970s were a transitional period in Shields' art. Early in the decade she made a series of quick line drawings of nude models, and several paintings in which she used line and color to create all-over



Untitled (Drawing produced in Hans Hofmann's class with assistance from Hofmann). 1957, Charcoal on Paper



TOP *Diffusion IV, WB.* 1969, Silkscreen; BOTTOM *Curve XI, B&W (10/15).* 1970, Silkscreen;
OPPOSITE *Barbara Millhouse, art lecturer.* 1988. Oil on Canvas with Collage

patterns derived from leaf shapes [CAT. NO. 19]. These are striking works that indicate potential for further development, but she declined to pursue additional efforts along these lines. Instead, Shields began experimenting with geometrical forms, an endeavor she pursued for several years in hard-edged, usually sharp-angled drawings and prints.

Shields' most ambitious efforts in the latter vein were for a mural design to be painted on a building exterior in downtown Winston-Salem. She was one of two artists the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County commissioned in 1974 to paint exterior walls of two buildings. The original site for her mural was a department store on the southwest corner of Fifth and Trade streets. After she painstakingly executed a number of large, precise drawings employing the wall's distinctive shape as an integral part of the design, she received notice of a change in the mural site (the department store would soon vacate the corner building). Shields had to start all over in creating an appropriate design for another building exterior on the same block.

Less immediately interesting than the original, irregularly shaped wall, the new site was a long, horizontal rectangle measuring 1,650 square feet. Her design divides this surface into six rectangular sections in shades of dark red (ranging from purple on the left to orange on the right), all on a uniformly gray background. These red-hued rectangles serve as grounds against which configurations of straight and right-angled white lines have been mathematically ordered to suggest sequential shifts in perspective. The north-facing wall extends along the middle of the block bounded by Cherry, Trade, Fourth, and Fifth streets. Shields' design, executed in the summer of 1975, remains on the wall but is now hard to see due to changes in its architectural surroundings and fading of the paint.

While working on the mural designs, Shields made a series of small, minimalist compositions in which thin strips of black, adhesive border tape were attached to 80 identically sized sheets of white paper. The aim was to create many different compositions in a mathematical sequence, akin to the one she had used for the mural design. By photographing each composition with slide film, she created a visual presentation in which the projected slides produce the effect of an animated cycle. The projection piece was automated to repeat continuously in an exhibition at SECCA in 1977.

Shields' "line period" concluded with several silkscreen-print series [CAT. NO. 20]. Her move away from working in this vein coincided with her husband's sabbatical from Wake Forest during the 1978-79 academic year. While he served as a visiting professor of physics at Yale University they rented a house for the entire family in Branford, Connecticut, overlooking Long Island Sound. The break from their routine gave her an opportunity to do some focused reading and belatedly bring herself up to date on the feminist movement. The setting also inspired a series of painterly meditations on the view of the sound from her bedroom window [CAT. NO. 21].

EXPERIMENTS IN PORTRAITURE

During the year in Connecticut, Shields made frequent visits to New York, where she showed photographs of some of her portraits to the directors of Portraits Inc., a leading portrait painters' gallery. Apparently impressed with her work, they accepted her for representation—an arrangement that has brought her a number of portrait commissions.⁶

Shields' next phase found her re-examining her view of portraiture as a merely commercial endeavor distinct from her serious art-making activities. After returning to Winston-Salem in 1979, she decided to paint portraits exclusively for five years. Relinquishing her old prejudices about the genre, she pursued commissions more actively, and began to approach each new portrait with as much attention to color and form as to capturing the subject's appearance and personality. She also began looking for ways to make each portrait relevant to contemporary life as well as the life of the subject.⁷

Reflecting on her decision, in 1982 she wrote, "I've until recently sought recognition through prizes and shows. When I gave that up, supposedly for only five years, I have found more authority—an ease and sureness..."⁸ The latter qualities are evident in her portraits of the Five Winston-Salem Printmakers, painted during this period [CAT. NO. 22, 23]. This group of life-size, full-figure portraits was first shown at SECCA in a 1983 exhibition devoted to the group in honor of its 20th anniversary.

A steady demand for Shields' portraits led her to continue working exclusively on portraiture well beyond the five-year period she initially earmarked. In the early 1980s she moved her studio into a new space on Burke Street. In 1987 she was awarded a fellowship from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts (VCCA), an artists' colony near Amherst, Virginia. Among the supplies she brought for her six-week stay was a collection of colored paper scraps intended for collages. Instead she devoted most of her residency to painting portraits of the 15 other visiting artists. Whereas she typically labored for days and weeks on a commissioned portrait, she allowed herself to work more spontaneously in portraying her fellow artists. Spending approximately two hours on each portrait, she depicted the subject frontally—head and shoulders—against a neutral ground. Pleased with the vitality these "quick portraits" had beyond her commissions, she experimented with some of them by incorporating colored paper scraps as collage elements.⁹

After her first stay at the center, Shields came back to Winston-



Salem and began making quick portraits of family members, friends, and professional associates. Returning to VCCA in the summer of 1988, she took these portraits and four file boxes of postcards, magazine cutouts, and colored papers. She spent her studio time developing a technique of juxtaposing portraits with collage elements chosen to reflect the subjects' personalities and special interests. 1988 was also the year Shields joined Artworks, the artists' cooperative that had opened a gallery in downtown Winston-Salem four years earlier. She used her first exhibition there—"Portrait Collages," in 1989—as an opportunity to introduce this new, hybrid body of work: creating a celebration of the local community, with a number of local subjects [CAT. NO. 24-26].

Shields considered the collage portraits shown at Artworks to be a finished body of work. Aside from a single commissioned collage portrait she made shortly after the exhibition closed, she made no more of them. She did, however, continue to paint portraits and experiment with collage in separate bodies of work. During her third visit to VCCA, in the summer of 1990, she painted another series of quick portraits of fellow artists she met there. Shortly thereafter Shields turned her eye on her fellow members of Artworks, painting quick portraits of all 20 of them (as well as herself) intended to be shown as a single installation titled *Artworkers*. She then gave her attention to painting quick portraits of homeless individuals—people usually overlooked by portrait painters and the rest of society. She obtained permission to set up a makeshift studio in a Winston-Salem homeless shelter and soup kitchen, Samaritan Ministries, where she spent two months painting quick portraits of individuals who came in for meals.¹⁰



Samaritan Guests (installation of portraits of diners at a free soup kitchen operated by Samaritan Ministries, Winston-Salem, North Carolina). 1991, Oil on Linen with Corrugated Cardboard

After completing portraits of 21 of Samaritan Ministries' clients on unprimed linen, Shields grouped them as an installation, "Samaritan Guests"—a gridded structure subdivided into individual boxes made of corrugated cardboard. Integral to her original concept for the piece, the format alludes to the public stereotyping of homeless people, literally and figuratively "putting them in boxes." Shields derived the idea for the gridded box format from one of Eva Hesse's sculptures, in which unevenly textured, beeswax-colored boxes were configured in a grid. When Shields saw the piece at the Museum of Modern Art she noticed that each box was about the right size for one of her portrait heads [CAT. NO. 28].¹¹

Upon completion of "Samaritan Guests," Shields painted portraits of 19 elderly adults—including her aunt—then living at Winston-Salem's Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community. They were conceived as components of an installation, a horizontal grid of 24 panels, including five blank canvases to represent deceased former residents. Several portraits were to be wrapped in semitransparent paper to suggest their subjects' declining mental and/or physical capacities, with the canvases mounted at varying distances from the wall to symbolize their subjects' varied ages. She titled the piece "At the Health Care Center" and exhibited it (as described above) in an Artworks Gallery exhibition in 1991, alongside "Samaritan Guests," her artists' portraits from VCCA, and the portraits of herself and her fellow "Artworkers."¹² Shields wrote that she hoped these "Group Portraits" would encourage attention to individual identities, as opposed to the group identities under which people are routinely categorized. "We speak of the elderly, for example, and the disadvantaged," she wrote. "Yet when you really stop and look at the people in any group, you see that everyone is an individual with a face and a personality and a life unlike any other."¹³

By the time that exhibition opened, Shields was at work on yet another piece in this vein, "Women of Letters: A Group Portrait of North Carolina Writers." Her friend Emily Wilson, a Winston-Salem writer, asked her to paint this 32-portrait installation for a women's literary conference in Winston-Salem. Because one of the participants, novelist Lee Smith, was unable to pose for Shields, the artist mounted all of the portraits on pages from Smith's novel "Fair and Tender Ladies." To complete the installation, Shields arranged the portraits and their printed-text background in a grid, attached them to plywood and painted a red border around the grid. The piece was formally unveiled at the conference in March 1992.¹⁴

These last three group portraits represent Shields' first efforts to deal with social concerns and identity politics in her art. In this respect they mark the end of her extended immersion in portraiture (for about thirteen years instead of the five to which she originally committed herself), and set the stage for the next big shift in her work. Thereafter she would continue to accept occasional portrait commissions, but her more conceptual, personally motivated work took some very different turns.

POSTMODERN MASH-UPS

As she worked on her final group portraits, Shields gave sporadic attention to a piece she would finish around 1993. *Color Cabinet* is an old, white-painted cupboard containing several shelves of toys and other plastic objects she had collected over several years. She organized them on the shelves according to color, leaving them crowded but not permanently fixed in place [CAT. NO. 29]. This assemblage relates to the next major development in her art in that it signaled a shift to making work entirely from what she found, rather than what she drew or painted.

Around the time she finished *Color Cabinet* Shields was looking closely at fashion photographs in magazines such as "W" and "Interview," as well as pinup photos of scantily clad women posed with motorcycles in copies of "Easy Rider" magazine (left at home by her eldest son when he embarked on a military career). These photos prompted her to start thinking more critically about the portrayal of women in contemporary commercial imagery and in art history. Shields broached this issue in the first of the large-scale, collage-format photocopy installations that have dominated her production since the mid-1990s.

Her initial forays into this postmodern, appropriationist territory were premiered in "Design and Desire," a 1994 solo exhibition at Artworks Gallery. For its centerpiece, *Opus - Gianni Versace - Milanese*, she juxtaposed fashion photos of nude men embracing scantily clad women against a Renaissance engraving



Color Cabinet. c.1992, Found Plastic Objects in Painted Wood and Glass Cabinet



by Antonio Pollaiuolo depicting muscular, nude males battling with sharp weapons. Photocopying these images in substantially enlarged scale, she wallpapered the sections in place to create a large, temporary mural.

Shields employed the same technique in the show's other, somewhat smaller pieces—most of which used images of seductively posed women to raise questions about beauty, sexuality and the commercial exploitation of women. The lone thematic exception, titled *A Generation Grows Up*, juxtaposed toy firearms with a documentary photo from the Bosnian Civil War, in which a young boy stands alongside a bullet-pocked wall and casually holds a rifle as he glares at the viewer. The critique of violence would emerge as an increasingly important theme in her work over the next ten years.

Shields extended her photocopy-installation experiments with a piece she created later in 1994 for Artworks Gallery's 10th-anniversary show and, in 1995, a second "Design and Desire" project for the atrium of Spirit Square Center for the Arts in Charlotte. The wall piece in the group show at Artworks used an enlarged reproduction of another Renaissance artwork—Bernardo Vavallino's biblically inspired painting *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*—to engage themes of violence and sexuality. A young woman holds the severed head of an enemy king in Vavallino's painting, which Shields surrounded with ten rectangular images—including contemporary photos of a provocatively posed young woman and an apprehensive-looking young man.

For her Charlotte installation, "Design and Desire II," Shields papered several indoor columns in Spirit Square's atrium with life-size photocopy images of goddesses as portrayed in classical statuary, and covered other columns with blown-up fashion photos of "statuesque" women. At both Spirit Square and Artworks—where in 1995 Shields also mounted her solo show "Pen-Ups: A Brief History of Nude Painting"—she augmented the visual imagery with printed handouts. Instead of statements about the works, these printed pages gave viewers questions to consider about the imagery and about art's longstanding preoccupation with sexuality and the female body.

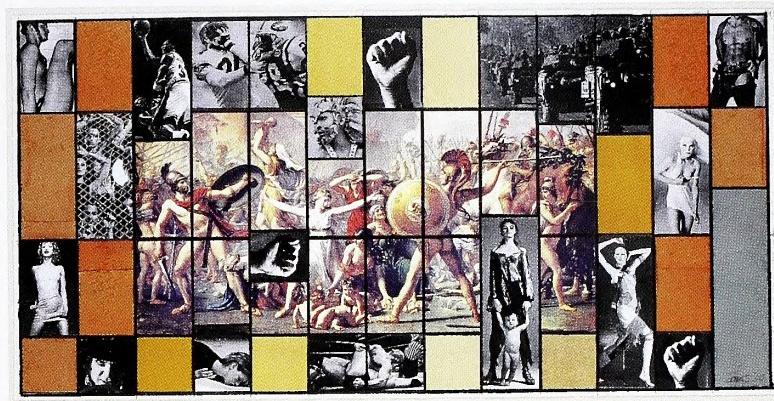
Shields broadened the thematic range of her appropriationist work with her 1996 solo show "The Garden of Earthly Delights," at Artworks. This gallery installation juxtaposed 18 contemporary photos of celebrities, fashion models, professional sports events and advertisements for designer goods with 12 details from Hieronymus Bosch's proto-surrealist triptych illustrating the demonic corruption of a terrestrial paradise. It was the first of three Bosch-referenced installations Shields has made, all playing details from this iconic, 500-year-old painting off of contemporary imagery in order to raise questions about the value system underlying our sex-obsessed, violence-prone consumer society.

Her next experiment in comparing Bosch's phantasmagorically perverse world with our own was a site-specific installation in "Amusements," a 1996 solo show at Long Island University's Salena Gallery in Brooklyn, New York. Its centerpiece, *Carousel, A March of Folly*, was a panorama of photocopied imagery on a long, curving wall—a scene in which sports heroes, motorcycle babes, supermodels, musclemen, and other contemporary figures joined a parade of naked men, women and animals.¹⁵

Shields' charged assemblage *Cross Purposes* (1996) was a temporary departure from her photocopy installations. Its appropriated components are three-dimensional, but it coheres thematically with her contemporaneous two-dimensional installations. The central component is a plastic figurine of a voluptuous, pale-skinned, blond woman modeling a black bikini—a cleverly designed shampoo bottle mass-produced in 1957. After buying this commercial artifact in a consignment shop, Shields noticed that the figure's near nakedness and her posture—legs pulled tightly together and stretched downward, arms thrown up and sharply bent at the elbow, with hands clasped behind the head—was uncannily reminiscent of traditional portrayals of the crucified Christ. She subsequently affixed it to a wooden cross she made at the appropriate scale and painted black to match the bikini. Shields completed the piece by adding a plastic novelty-store skull at the bottom of the cross. She didn't exhibit it for the first time until early 1998, when it appeared in a group show at Artworks Gallery. Although *Cross Purposes* is open to a range of interpretations, its treatment of religion, death, and sex quickly rendered it controversial. Several irate comments were left at the gallery by viewers who felt it was sacrilegious, and there was at least one letter to the local newspaper voicing the same complaint after a photograph of the piece was published in its pages.¹⁶

As the 1990s drew to a close, Shields exhibited several other two-dimensional appropriated-image installations and related collages in Winston-Salem. Consistent with her previous work in these media, these works juxtaposed commercial and journalistic photographs with art-historical imagery in order to highlight the endurance of controversial themes in art [CAT. NO. 30-35].

She wrapped up the decade with what was then her most ambitious work in this vein, *Return of the Sabines*, a large photocopy mural she made for installation in SECCA's Overlook Gallery in February 2000. Subdivided into a black-lined grid of 50 variously sized rectangles—playing off of the similarly subdivided window on the opposite side of the gallery—it centered on a heroically scaled, fragmented reproduction of Jacques Louis David's *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* (1799). She surrounded and intercut David's composition with contemporary black-and-white photographs and colored panels whose solid, muted tones echo those in the painting. Juxtaposed with the dramatically staged scene from Roman history (in which women place their bodies between two opposing military forces) were 17 enlarged magazine photographs of sports action, a contemporary military invasion, fashion models and pop-culture



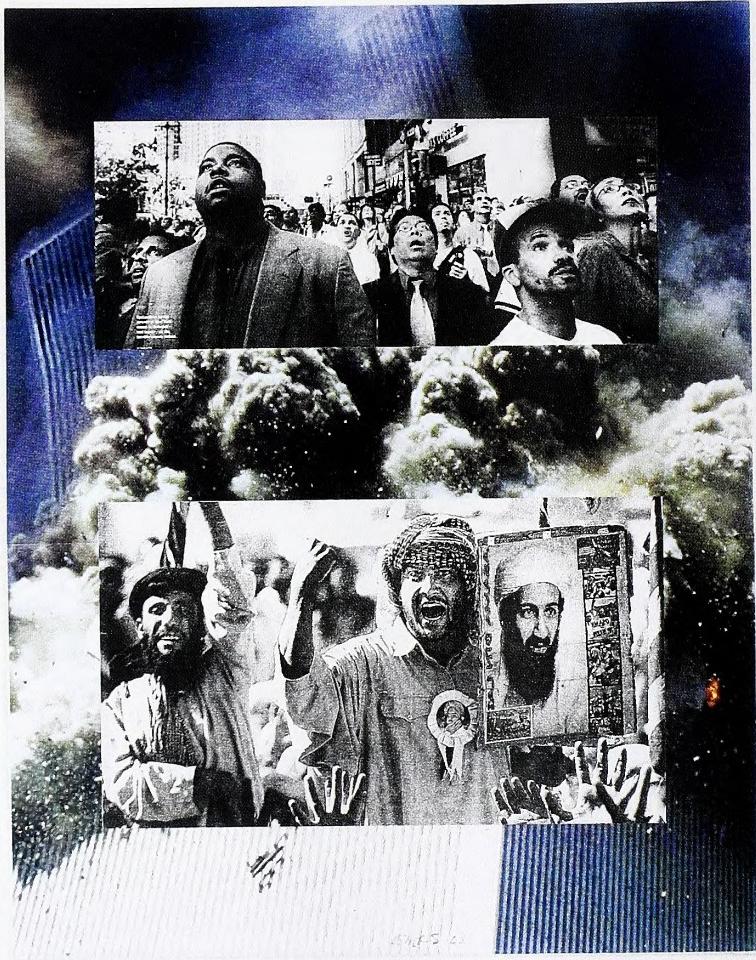
icons, among other subjects [CAT. NO. 36].

With its focus on war and attempts to prevent it, the latter work seems uncannily prophetic in hindsight. Although nominally at peace when Shields completed the *Sabines* mural, the United States would soon be deeply involved in two wars that were controversial because they were preventable (among other reasons). The literally earthshaking events to take place during the next few years would quickly come to occupy center-stage in Shields' art.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF 9/11

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and the U.S. government's response to those tragedies had profound effects in this country and throughout the Middle East. Shields was among many U.S. citizens for whom these events had personal significance, as her elder son Burton was a career military officer. He had served in Iraq during the first Gulf War in the early 1990s, and was subject to being ordered back to that part of the world to help prosecute the so-called "war on terror." In view of Shields' engagement with issues of war and violence in several previous works, it was of little surprise that she began making art in response to the attacks and the ensuing U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

Her first pieces to take on these subjects were small photocollages made in late 2001 and early 2002. They juxtaposed images of the World Trade Center before, during, and after the attacks; news photos of anti-American demonstrators in the Middle East; military photos of smoke billowing from the scene of a military strike; images



of traditional Islamic art and architecture; and scenes of New York firefighters in action [CAT. NO. 37-47]. She showed several of these collages in a group exhibition at Artworks Gallery early in 2002. As that show was closing, her first large-scale photocopy installation to deal with the World Trade Center attack went on view at Salem College's Fine Arts Center in "Full Circle," a retrospective by the Five Winston-Salem Printmakers. *Sixteen Percent* grouped head-shots of 16 per cent of the people killed in the attack into two columnar grids visually echoing the twin towers' silhouettes, set off against a black ground.

In the spring of 2003, following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Shields used the towers' silhouettes as evocative visual devices in what was then her most ambitious treatment of the 9/11 attacks

and their aftermath. This solo exhibition at Artworks Gallery consisted of a single installation that stretched across most of three walls. Its title, *Negative Spaces*, referred to the figure-ground relationship in two-dimensional art, and to the literal and metaphorical spaces formerly occupied by the twin towers. Shields placed large silhouettes of the towers in the centers of four interconnected, billboard-scale photocopy murals incorporating images of military tanks, anti-U.S. protesters, pop singer Britney Spears, Mongol warriors from a 14th-century illustration, and a Mercator map of the world. The tower shapes were white in all but one case, in which they were mirrored panels that showed viewers their own reflections. Emphasizing the twin towers' absence, the military response to the attacks, and the sharp cultural differences that divide the United States from the traditional Islamic world, the piece made for a timely, provocative statement about perilous times in a violently polarized world.

In 2004 Shields devised a modular, portable format for presenting large appropriated-image pieces. She made several that were subdivided into 16-by-20-inch panels mounted in black metal frames, thus allowing these works to be easily assembled, dismantled, and reassembled elsewhere.¹⁷ Five such pieces made up her solo exhibition, "Ambiguities," which traveled to four galleries in the region.¹⁸ The imagery in these pieces includes U.S. military personnel, a military helicopter, miscellaneous weapons, a roulette wheel, tangled barbed wire, columns of smoke, the U.S. flag, U.S. political leaders, a Superman figurine, crowds of anti-American demonstrators, and art-historical images of armies on the march or in combat [CAT. NO. 48, 49]. These are critiques of advertising like Shields' pre-9/11 installations, but in this case the advertising at issue is the Bush administration's effort to sell the Iraq war as a successful undertaking.

The same general categories of imagery were represented in Shields' installation *Constant Battles* (commissioned by Second Street Gallery in Charlottesville, Virginia), where it appeared in 2005; and in her similarly large *View from the Towers*, created in 2006 for the gallery at her alma mater, Hollins University. For these two pieces exploring armed conflict through the ages, she returned to the wallpapering technique, as she would with her next three installation projects.

The first of these—*Earthly Delights in the 21st Century: Bosch Revisited*—was created in 2007 for the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Harking back to her previously discussed, Bosch-derived piece at Artworks Gallery in 1996, this larger installation also juxtaposed contemporary



To be a success, you give
your best. And we believe you
deserve the same in return. On



photographic imagery with details from Bosch's triptych. It revisited the same themes treated in the earlier work, but, like Shields' other post-9/11 pieces, it also made prominent use of images exemplifying the violent clash between Western consumer-capitalist values and Islamic fundamentalism. The Boone installation encompassed two interconnected floors of the Turchin Center's Mayer Gallery, including several large panes of the two-story bank of windows on one corner (parts of which she covered with large photocopy transparencies). The gallery's substantial size and other variables made *Earthly Delights in the 21st Century* Shields' most challenging appropriated-image project to date [CAT. NO. 50].

She faced the opposite challenge in her next installation project at the Waterworks Visual Arts Center in Salisbury, North Carolina, where she was invited to work with two small, adjoining galleries separated by a wall. *Boundaries*, the installation she created for this bifurcated space in early 2008, appropriately emphasized walls and other barriers, literal as well as philosophical and metaphorical. Raising timely issues of security, involuntary confinement, and cultural prejudice, the piece incorporated visual references to the World Trade Center attack and the U.S.-led wars in the Middle East, but it also included imagery related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and tensions along the border between the United States and

Model for Project at Turchin Center for the Arts: *Earthly Delights in the 21st Century: Bosch Revisited*.

Model: 2006 / Installation: 2007. Foamcore Board and Photocopied Images on Paper

Mexico. The large-scale imagery lent these small galleries a claustrophobic ambience that nonetheless effectively highlighted some of the installation's themes.

For a 2009 solo exhibition at Artworks Gallery, Shields returned to the modular format she had used five years earlier in her touring “*Ambiguities*” exhibition. The Artworks show, however, consisted of one continuous photocopy mural spread across three walls—63 individual images subdivided into a grid of 93 evenly sized, black-framed panels. *Ambiguities II*, as it was titled, presented a more complex, critical view of contemporary reality and its historical precedents. Dominated by religious and/or political imagery—cathedrals, mosques, portraits of saints and warriors, and crowds of people assembled for religious, military, or political purposes—it also included images highlighting the vulnerability of the human body. Acknowledging the historic transition of presidential power, Shields strategically placed an image of the crowd at President Obama’s inauguration in the center of the composition, near an image of the throngs in front of the Lincoln Memorial in the summer of 1963 for Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. The installation constituted a thoughtful meditation on life in a densely interconnected, sometimes violently contentious, postmodern world where social, political, and moral ambiguities prevail.

In creating her photocopy murals and related works, Shields developed a content-rich language of correspondence among multiple images. Informed by her lifelong study of art history and her steady attention to contemporary photographic imagery, this visual language has given her the means to continually create fresh, thought-provoking juxtapositions.

INTO THE PRESENT

As the first decade of the new millennium drew to a close—and as Shields began her seventh decade of art-making—she interrupted her extended involvement with appropriated imagery to create a site-specific piece for the Hanesbrands Theater in downtown Winston-Salem’s new Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts. As one of two artists commissioned to paint the corrugated-steel fire doors on the new theater’s north and south interior walls, Shields chose to revisit her earlier experiments with geometric abstraction and color relationships. On the north wall’s upper and lower fire doors she created an elegant op-art diptych composed of vertical stripes in alternating shades of red and gray. The stripes are horizontally

staggered at intervals to create a kind of stairstep effect that enhances this work’s subtle retinal buzz.¹⁹

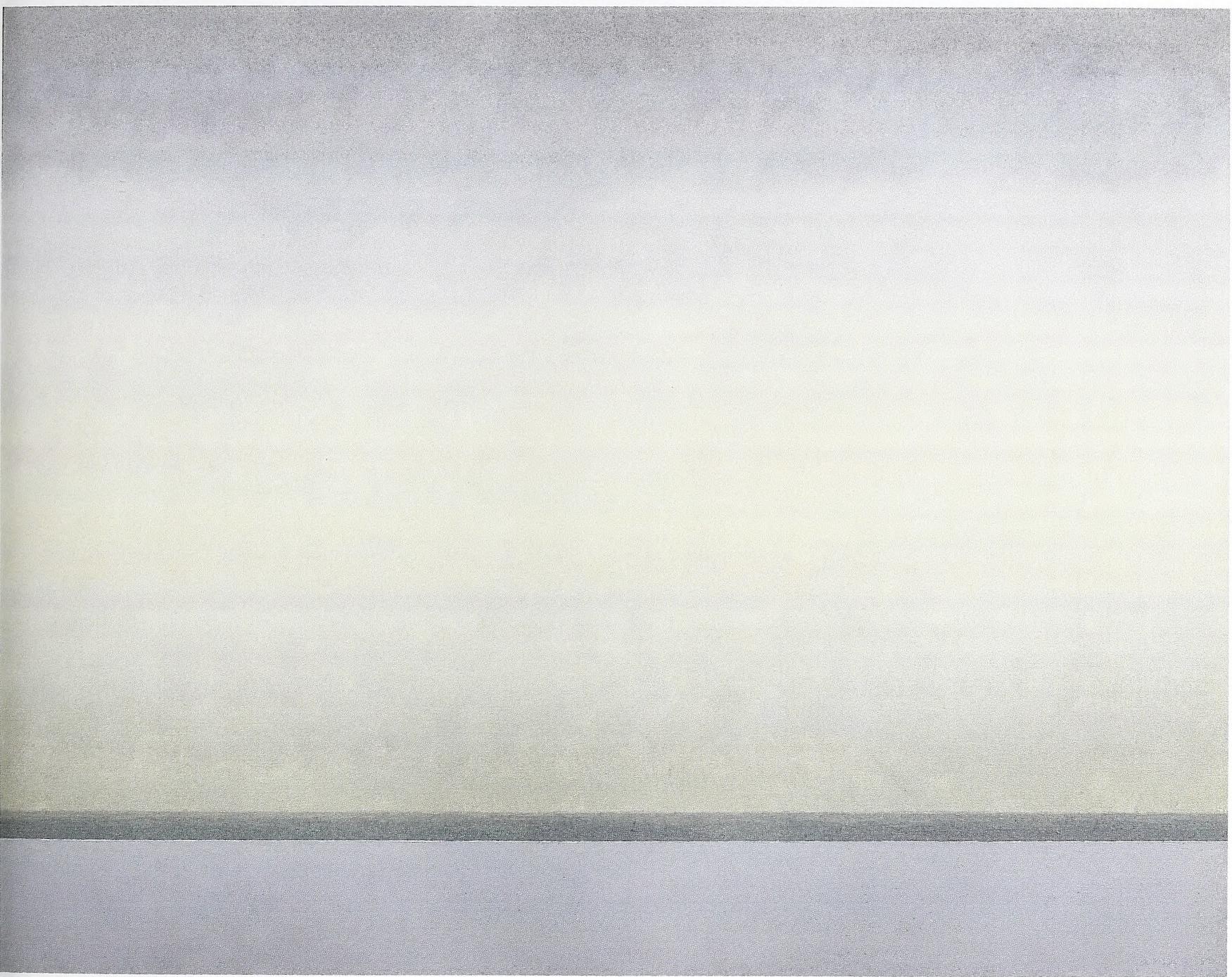
Shields resumed her appropriationist work in 2011, limiting herself to paired images this time. As a personal tribute to the collection of American art at Winston-Salem’s Reynolda House, she created a dozen 40-by-48-inch wallpaper “Diptychs” at Artworks Gallery, each combining a reproduction of a painting from Reynolda’s collection with a contemporary photograph. For example, one diptych placed Thomas Eakins’ unflattering 1905 portrait of A.W. Lee alongside a recent photo of Iggy Pop. Lee’s sallow, bleary-eyed face—like that of the aging rock star in the companion photo—makes him look old, cranky and exhausted. The title Shields gave to this pair of portraits, *Uptight*, plays on a comparison between Lee’s buttoned-up black suit jacket over a stiff-collared white shirt, and Iggy’s bare, muscular torso tightly entwined by a black rope. In the top half of a diptych Shields titled *Kiss*, two exotic hummingbirds touch their long beaks together in a detail from Martin Johnson Heade’s 1871 painting *Orchid with Two Hummingbirds*, while the photo below it depicts a young man and woman touching the tips of their extended tongues together. In the other diptychs Shields set up similarly provocative juxtapositions of contemporary photos with details from Reynolda’s paintings by Thomas Hart Benton, John Singleton Copley, Elliot Daingerfield, Edward Hicks, William Rimmer, Joseph Stella, Jeremiah Theus, and Grant Wood.

In shifting from her complex, multi-image installations to the chromatically nuanced, geometric-abstract paintings for the Hanesbrands Theater, then to the seemingly simple placement of one picture next to another in her Reynolda House “Diptychs,” Shields demonstrated a revealing ease. This sequence of sharp but graceful turns once again exemplifies her versatility—a strength that has long been evident in her work. It also indicates an impressive aesthetic agility, the confidence of a mature artist, and a sense of artistic freedom that comes with the territory.

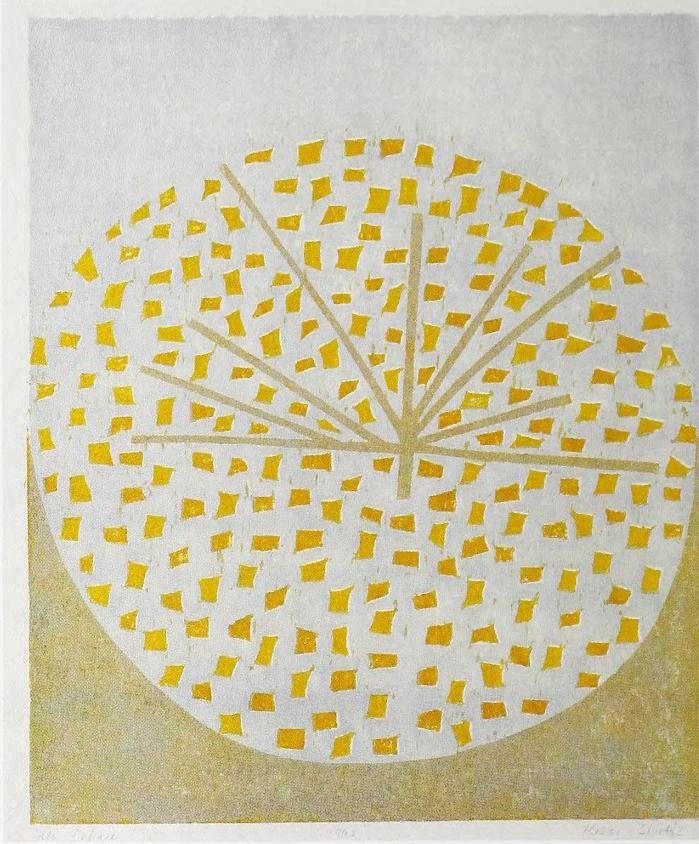
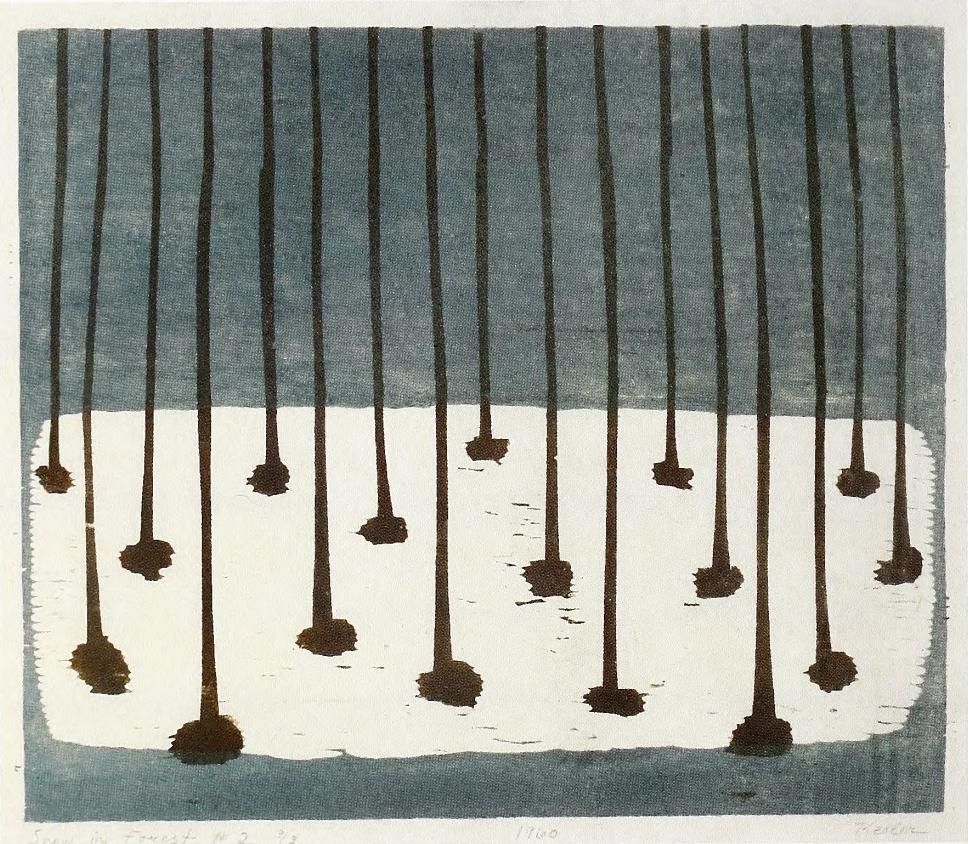
Shields has worked at a consistently high level since the 1950s, periodically renewing and revitalizing her practice to ensure its continued relevance to contemporary art and society. For a “regional” artist of her generation—one who has opted to “bloom where she was planted”—she has made a significant mark. In a small city home to a surprising number of accomplished contemporary artists, Shields occupies a singular position and is highly respected among contemporaries who know her work. This exhibition leaves no doubt as to why that is.

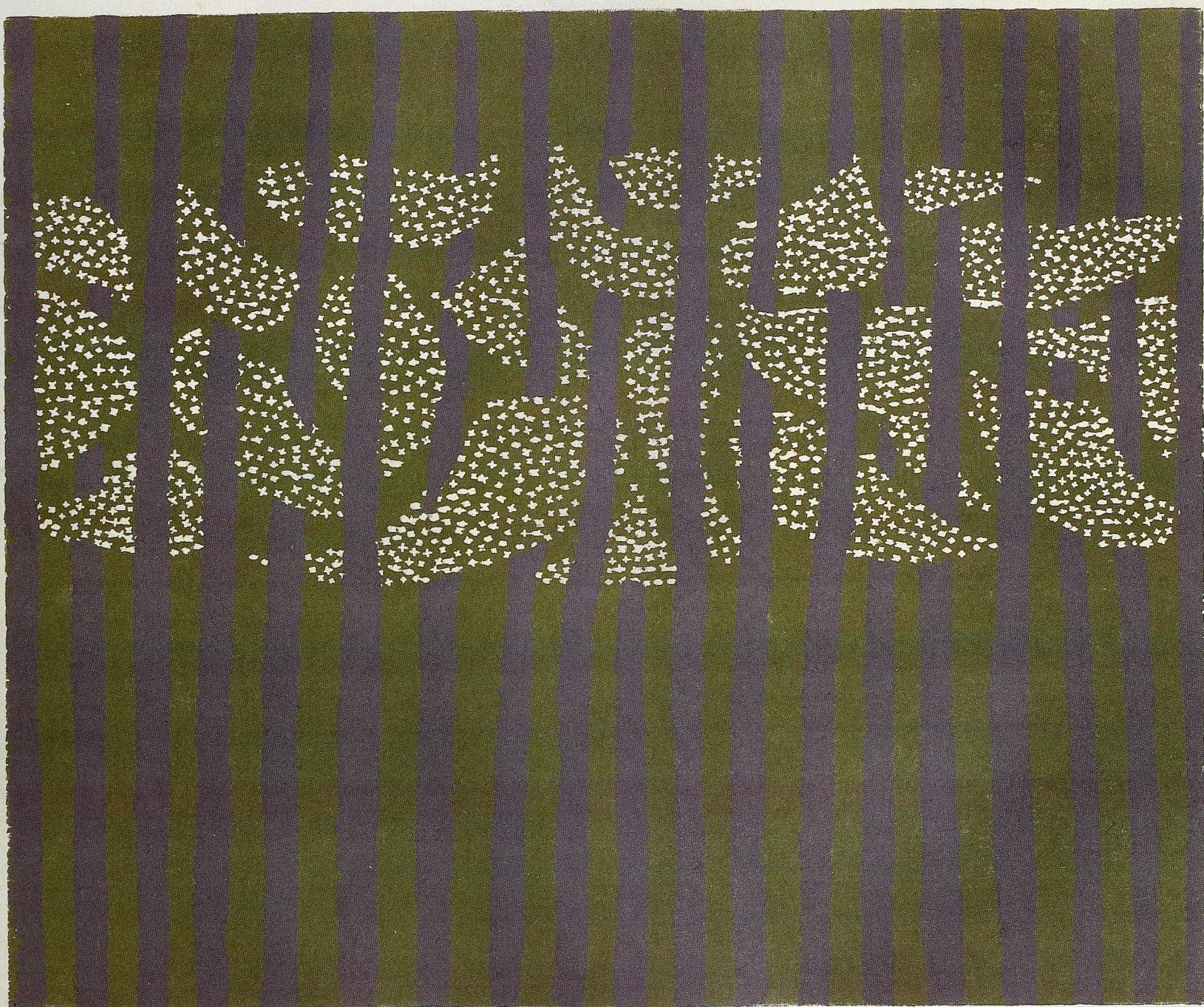
NOTES

1. Severn Leigh Somerville wrote a biography of Shields in the late 1990s, an extended narrative that emphasizes the artist's attempts to balance her private life and her work as a determined professional artist. The author is indebted to Somerville for allowing access to her 130-page manuscript, which remains unpublished. It has proven to be a useful supplement to the author's extensive interviews and discussions with Shields about her work and her career.
2. The regional gallery that evolved over the next decade into SECCA was originally called the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Art.
3. Quoted in Somerville manuscript.
4. The group became the Five Winston-Salem Printmakers Plus One when they were joined by artist Martha Dunigan in 1970, but reverted to its original name with Mary Goslen's resignation in 1976. Winston-Salem artist Mitzi Shewmake wrote a detailed article about the group, with profiles of all five, in *Women's Art Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring/Summer 1984, pp. 40-46.
5. Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963). A less expensive paperback edition was published in 1971.
6. Shields had initially contacted Portraits Inc. about representing her portrait work in the early 1960s, but at the time the gallery declined.
7. Her revitalized approach to portraiture was inspired by the portraits of Fairfield Porter and Alex Katz.
8. Excerpted from a 1982 journal entry as quoted in Somerville manuscript.
9. Shields found her experience at VCCA so stimulating that she returned four times over the next several years for additional periods of concentrated work.
10. Because of her subjects' disadvantaged circumstances, she paid them \$10 each to pose for her.
11. Shields donated *Somaritan Guests* to Wake Forest University, where it usually hangs in the Worrell Professional Center.
12. Shields donated *At the Health Care Center* to Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Winston-Salem, where it remains on display.
13. Artist's statement quoted in Somerville manuscript.
14. *Women of Letters: A Group Portrait of North Carolinians* now hangs in the Wake Forest University Library, where it is on extended loan from the artist.
15. This was the first out-of-state exhibition to showcase Shields' photocopy-installation work. The images of naked humans and other animals in its large mural were appropriated from the central panel of Bosch's *Garden triptych*. Her wallpapered installations have all been site-specific and impermanent, evidenced after their exhibition only in installation photographs, the three-dimensional gallery models Shields made to plan them, and the smaller photocollages she made as studies or thematically related byproducts [SEE CAT. NO. 36, 50].
16. *Cross Purposes* was pictured in the Winston-Salem Journal on Sunday, Feb. 1, 1998, alongside the author's review of Artworks Gallery's "New Year Show" (Tom Patterson, "Landscapes & Animals," p. E4). Typical of angry comments about the piece was the complaint registered by a reader in a letter to the editor: "I deeply resent the symbol of our faith being put on display for the amusement of others." (*Winston-Salem Journal*, "Letters to the Editor," Saturday, Feb. 14, 1998, p. A14).
17. Over the next two years she created several such portable, large-format collages ranging from seven to more than 100 framed panels.
18. "Ambiguities" was initially on view in 2004 at the Bell Gallery at Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina. In 2005 it made appearances at Artworks Gallery; the Theatre Art Galleries in High Point, North Carolina; and at the Piedmont Arts Association in Martinsville, Virginia.
19. The fire-door commissions were painted in 2010, prior to the Rhodes Center's opening late in the summer of that year. Also commissioned for the project was Hieronymus Schofferman—a Winston-Salem native almost 50 years younger than Shields—who painted the upper and lower fire doors on the theater interior's south side.



Ice and Winter Afternoon Glow. 1980, Oil on Canvas





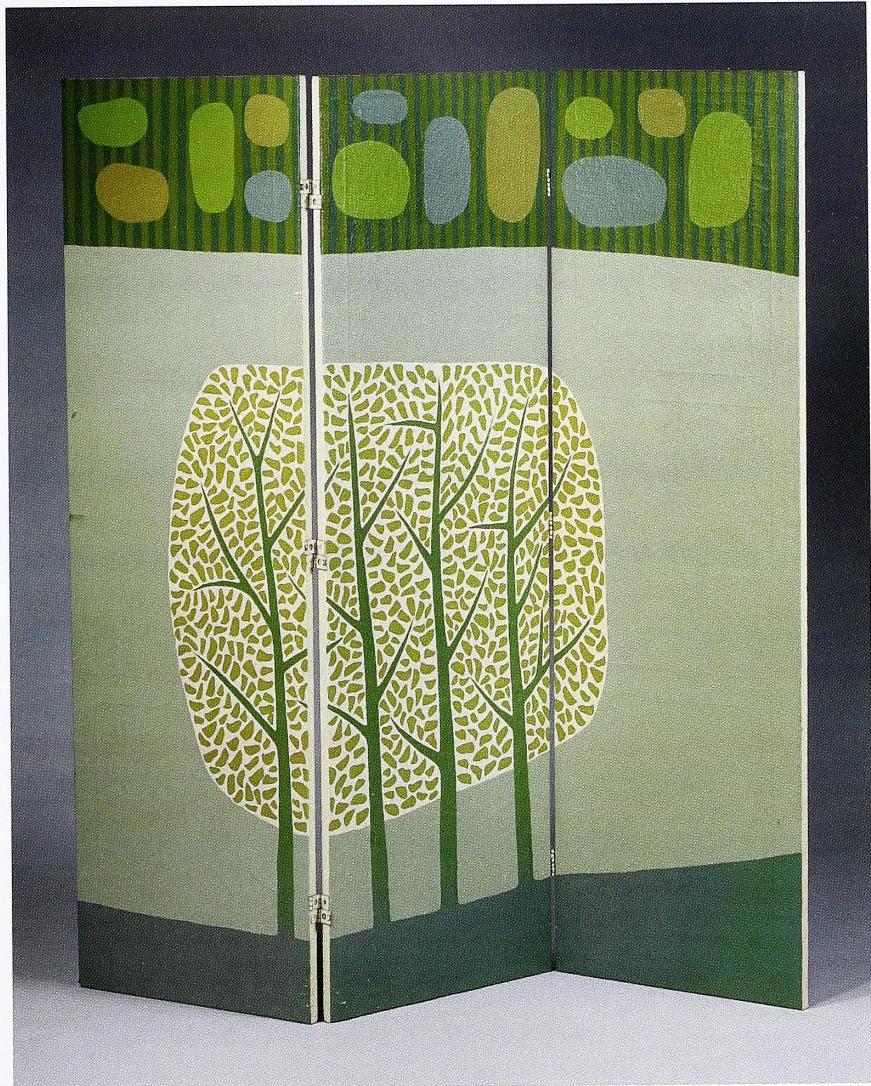
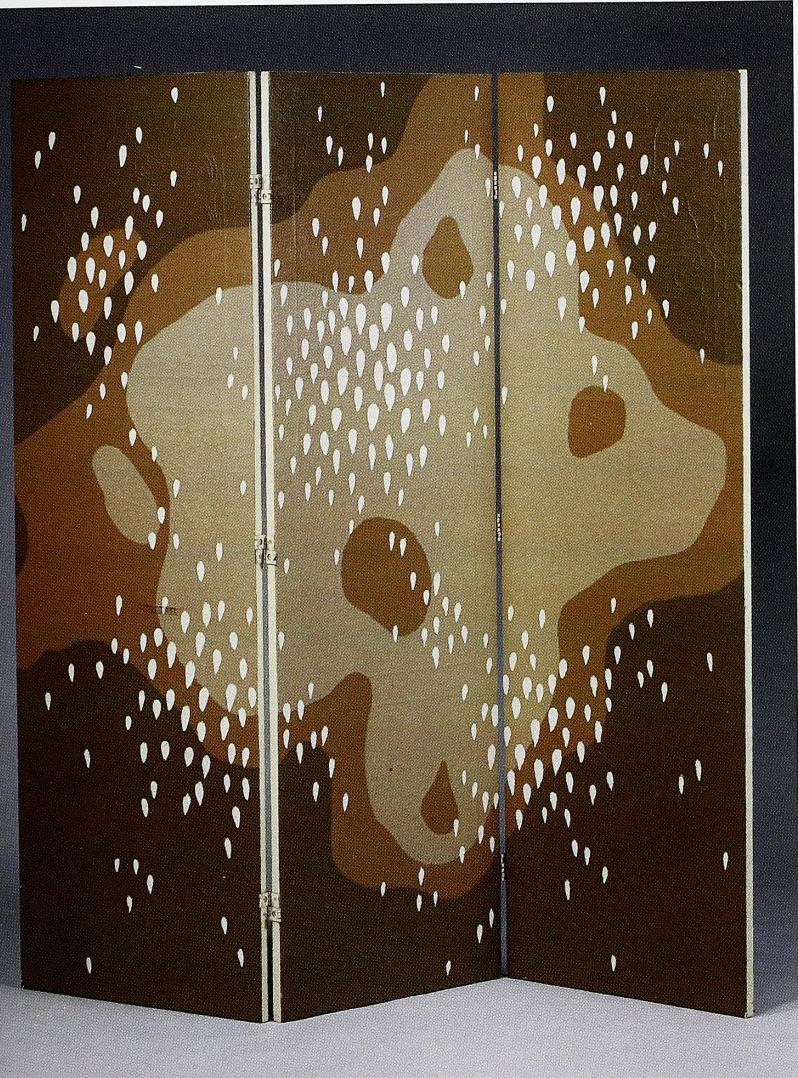
Dogwood in Forest 7/10

1961

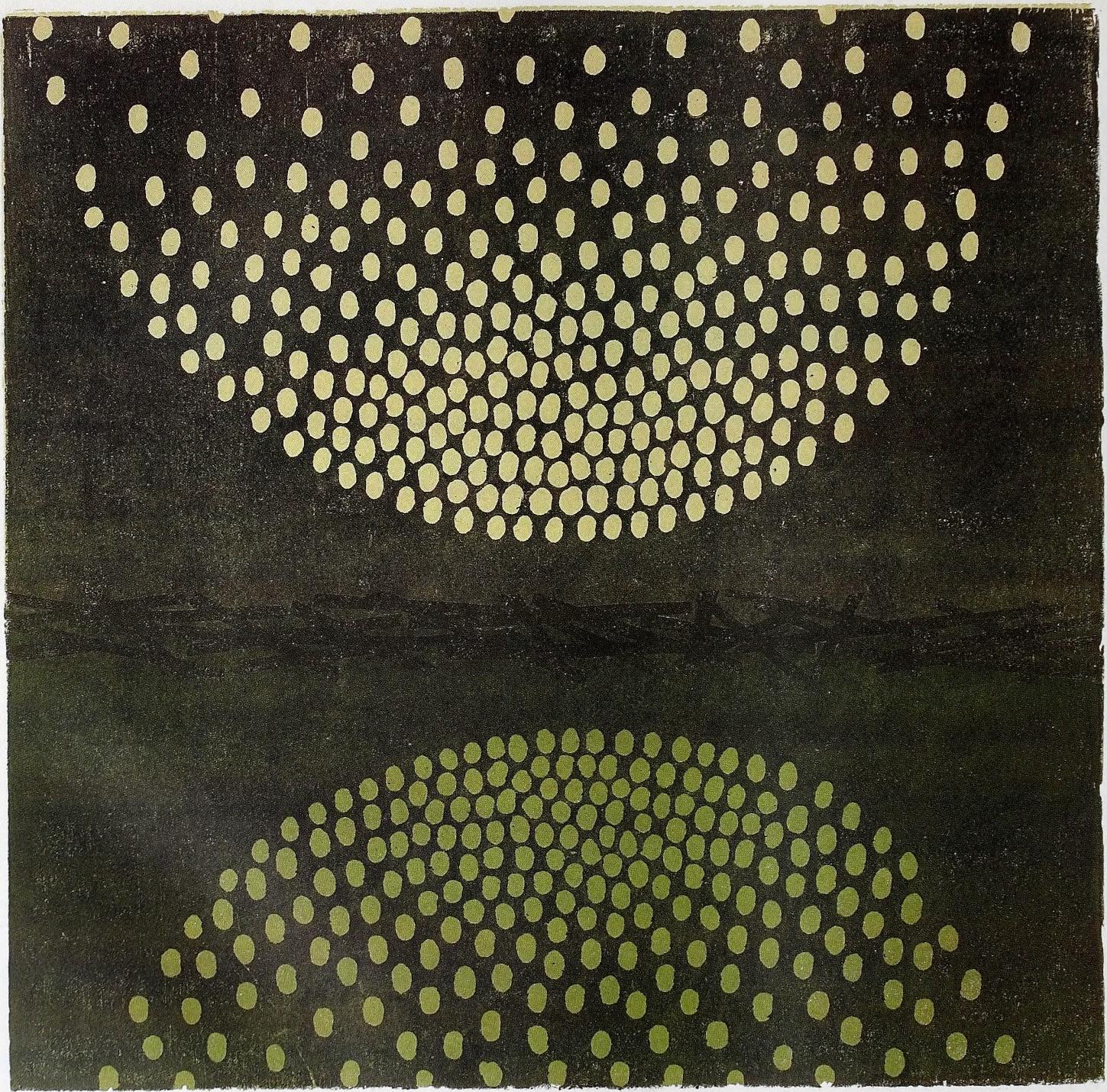
Lester Shields



Kosha 1983 62



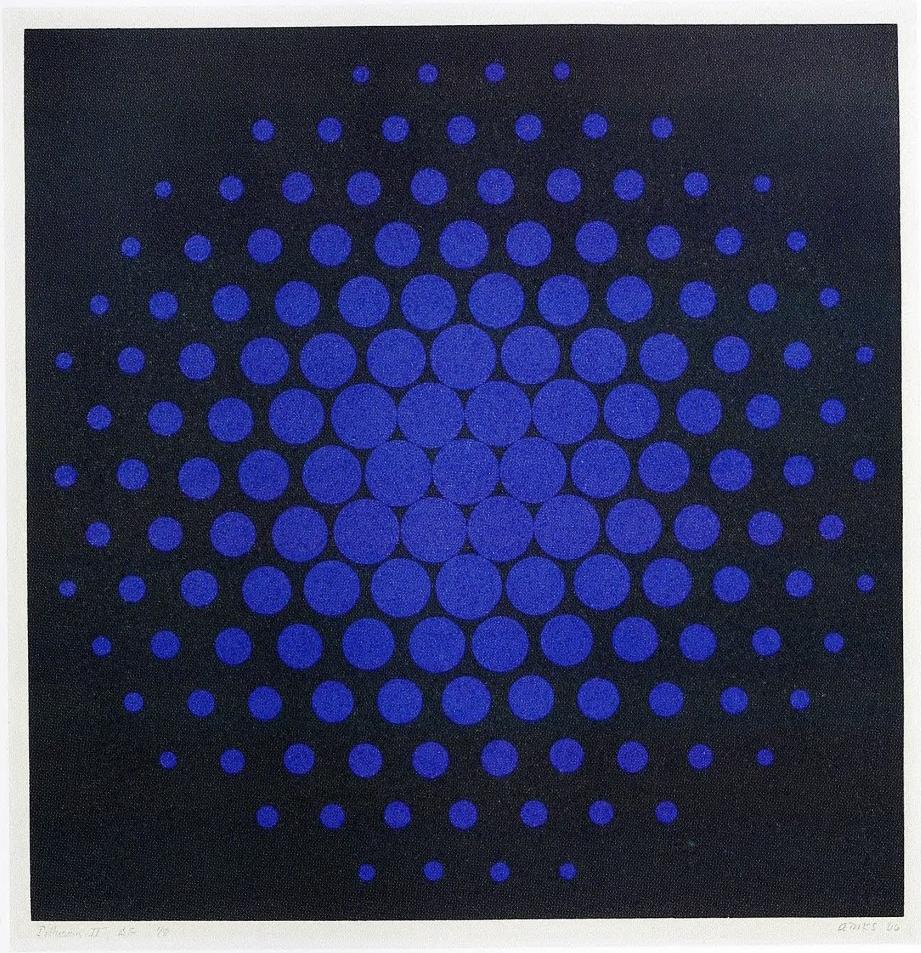
Untitled (Three-panel Folding Screen). c.1962, Oil on Panel; OPPOSITE **Spring Snow #2**. 1962, Oil on Canvas



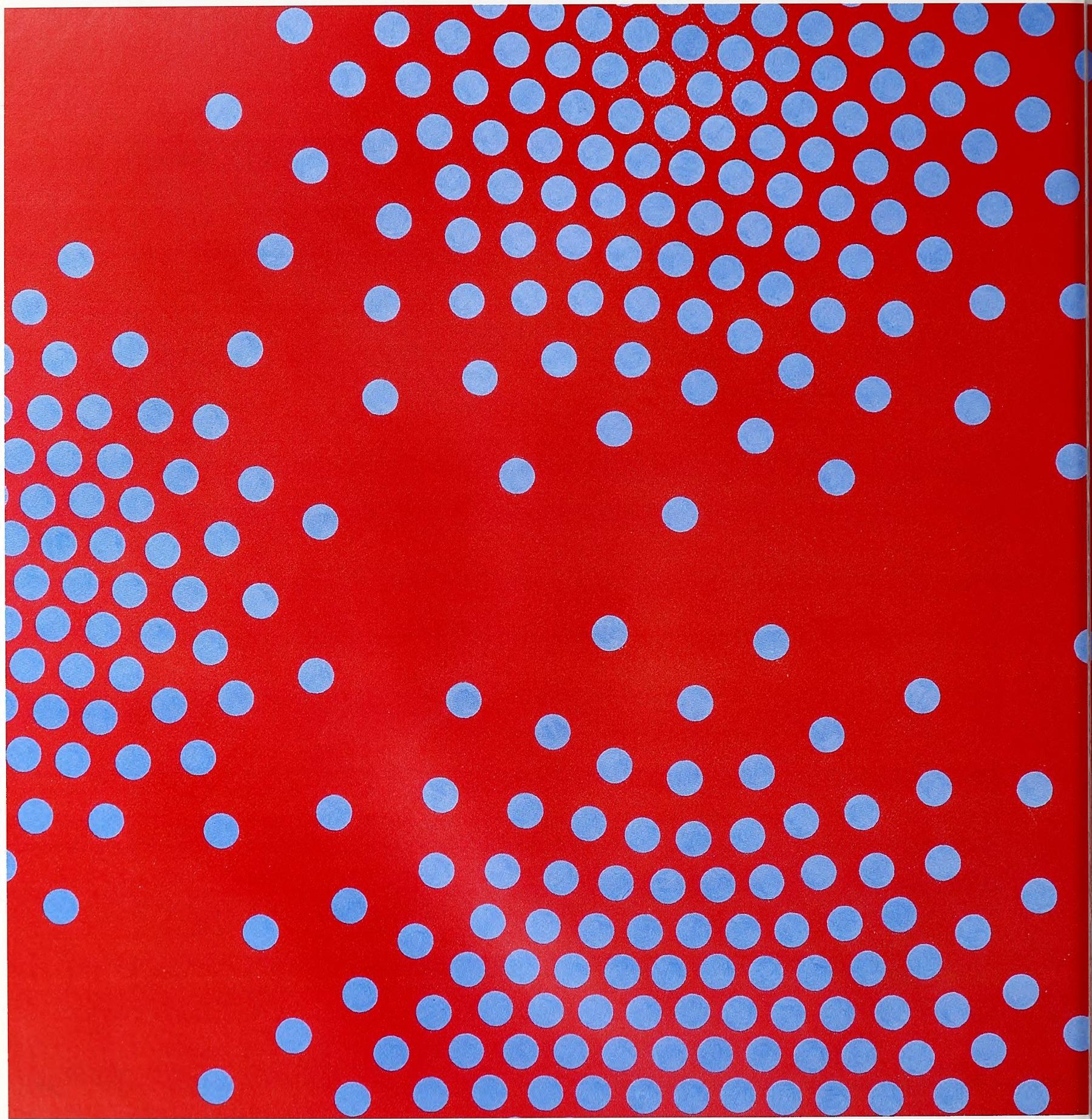
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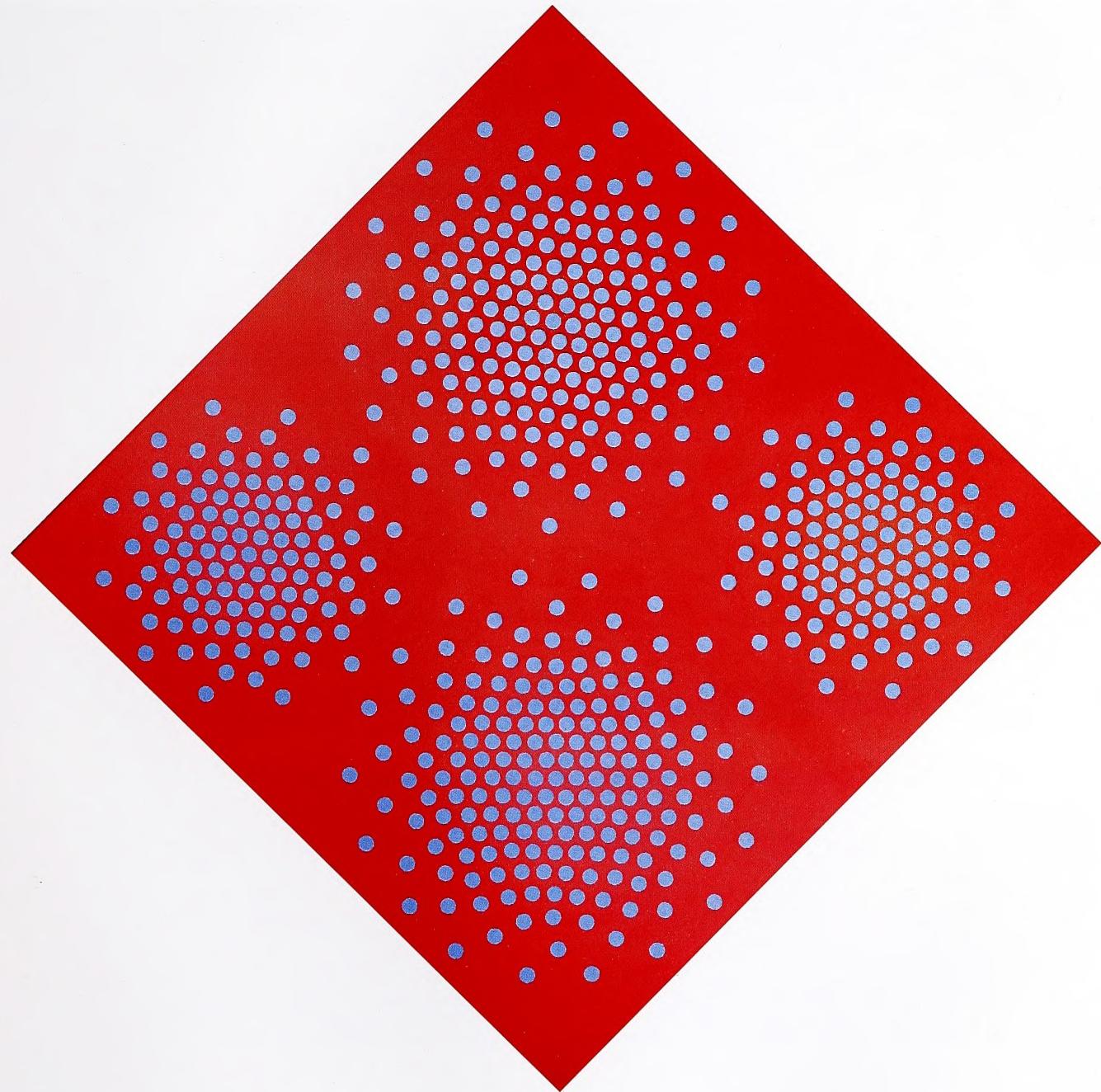
1983

Rainer Krieler

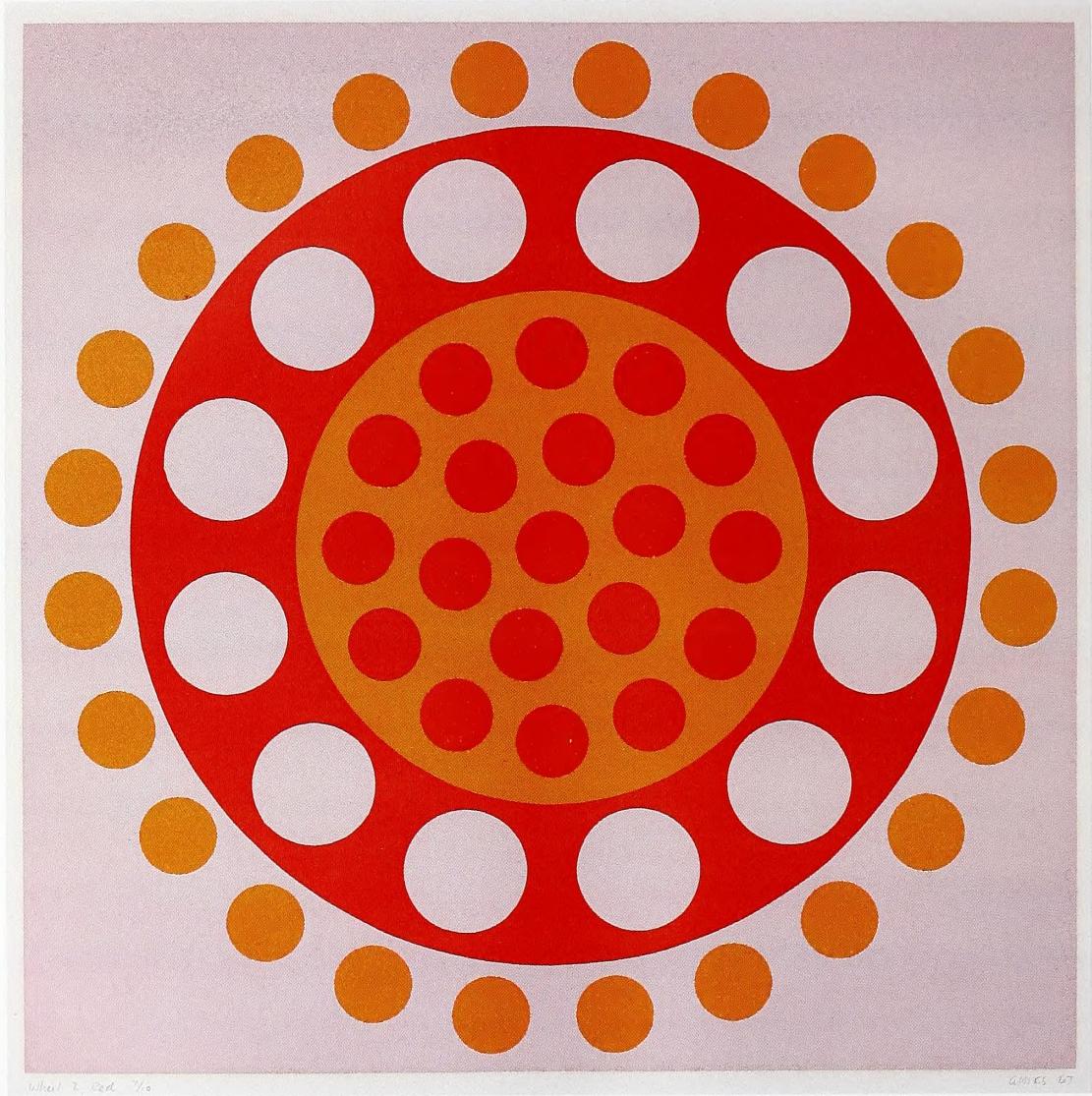


Diffusion II, BG. 1966, Silkscreen; OPPOSITE **Reflection.** 1963, Woodcut





Blue Quartet. c.1965, Oil on Canvas







Marjorie Northup, museum educator. 1988, Oil on Canvas with Collage;
OPPOSITE **Charles Phillips, restoration architect.** 1988, Oil on Canvas with Collage







Samaritan Guests (installation of portraits of diners at a free soup kitchen operated by Samaritan Ministries, Winston-Salem, North Carolina). 1991, Oil on Linen with Corrugated Cardboard



Artist by a Window (Martha Dunigan) (from "Five Winston-Salem Printmakers" series). 1982, Oil on Canvas
OPPOSITE **Color Cabinet**. c.1992, Found Plastic Objects in Painted Wood and Glass Cabinet (detail)



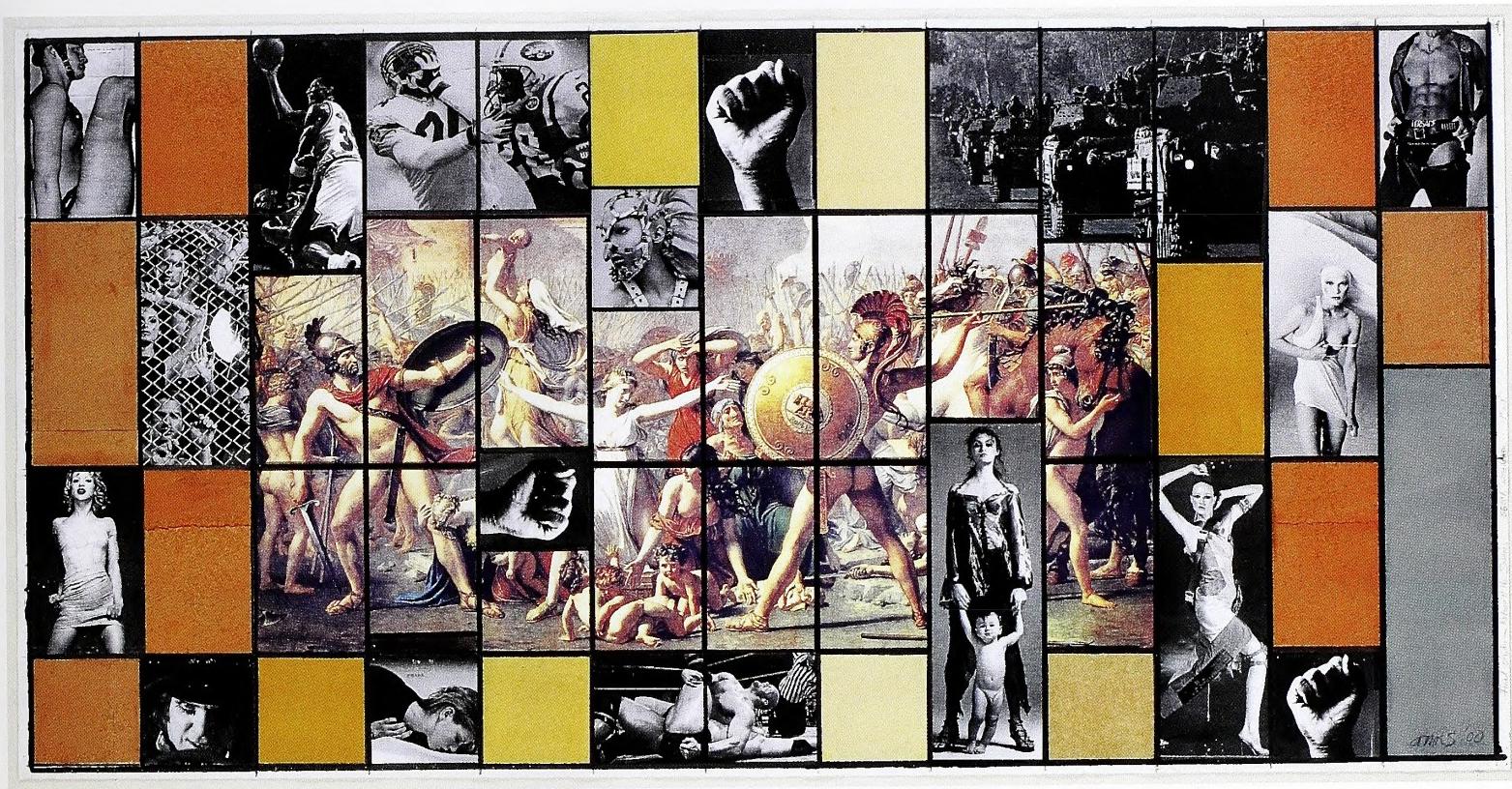




NEW YORK DENVER



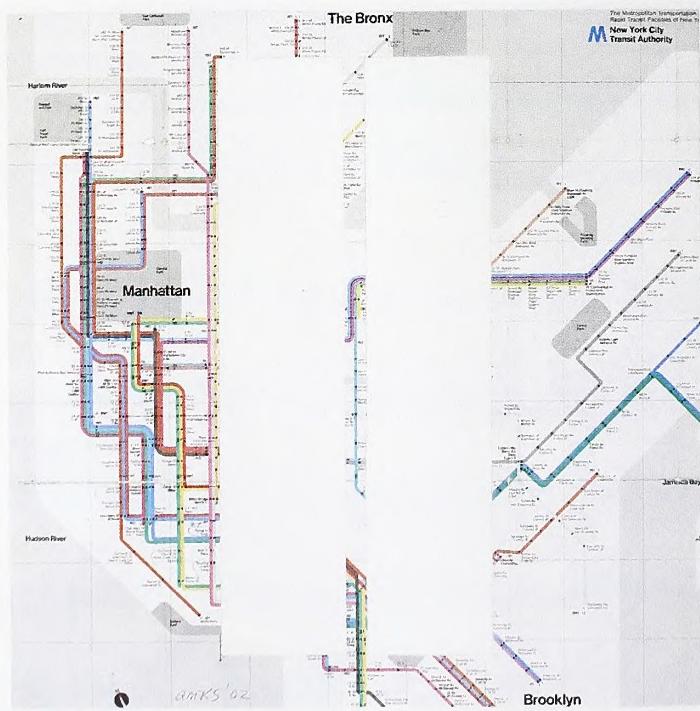
NEW YORK REVIEW



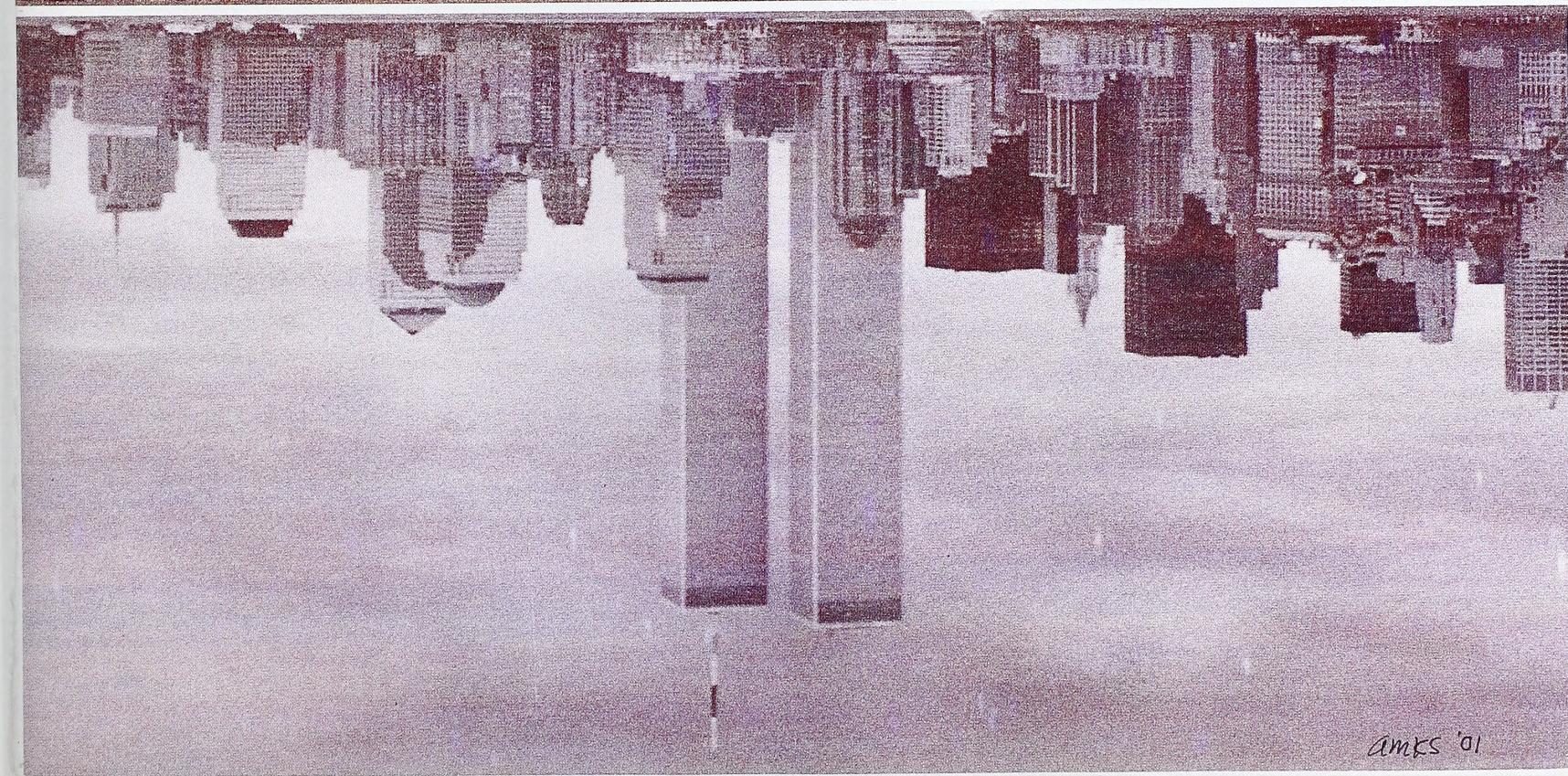
Return of the Sabines. 2000, Collage Study for Commissioned Photocopy Mural at SECCA; OPPOSITE *Checkers*. 1996, Collage (detail)

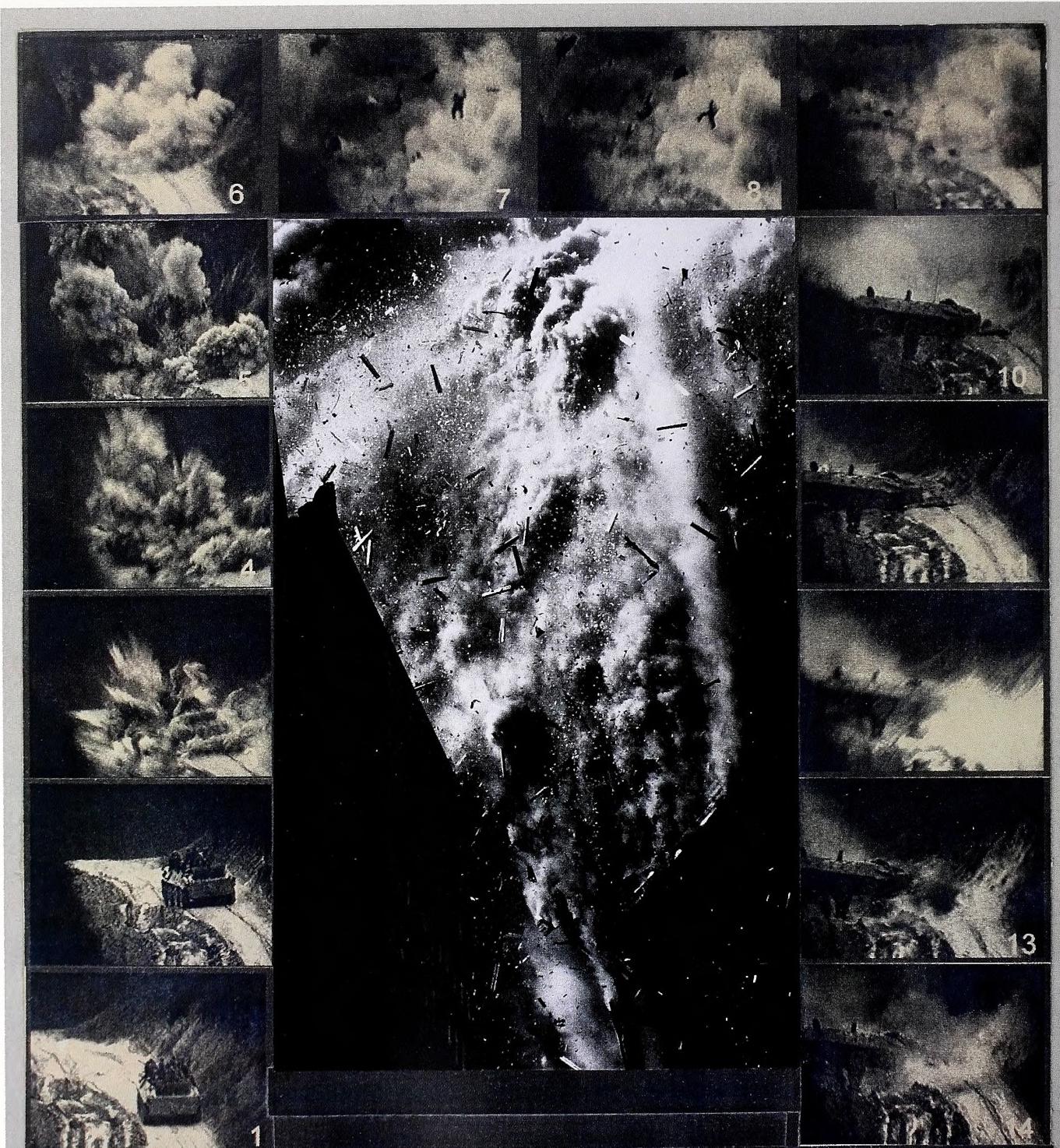






TOP *Homage to Shirin Neshat*. 2001, Collage; *Prayer Towers*. 2001, Collage;
BOTTOM *Manhattan Project*. 2002, Collage; OPPOSITE *9/11*. 2001, Collage





This is from a former squadron member and CCT guy. Job satisfaction.

Subject: Attack on a Taliban BMP

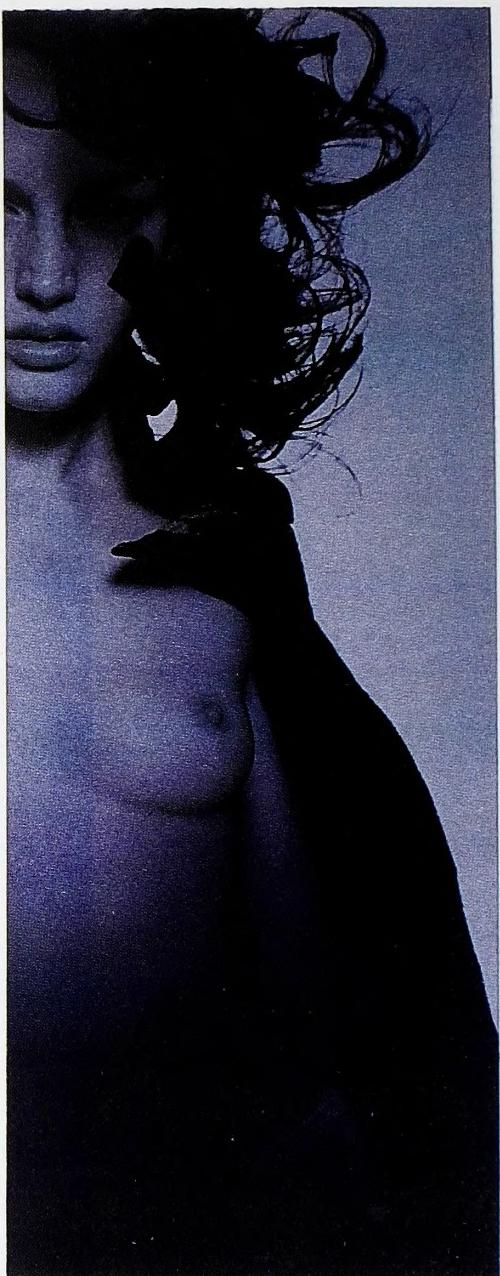
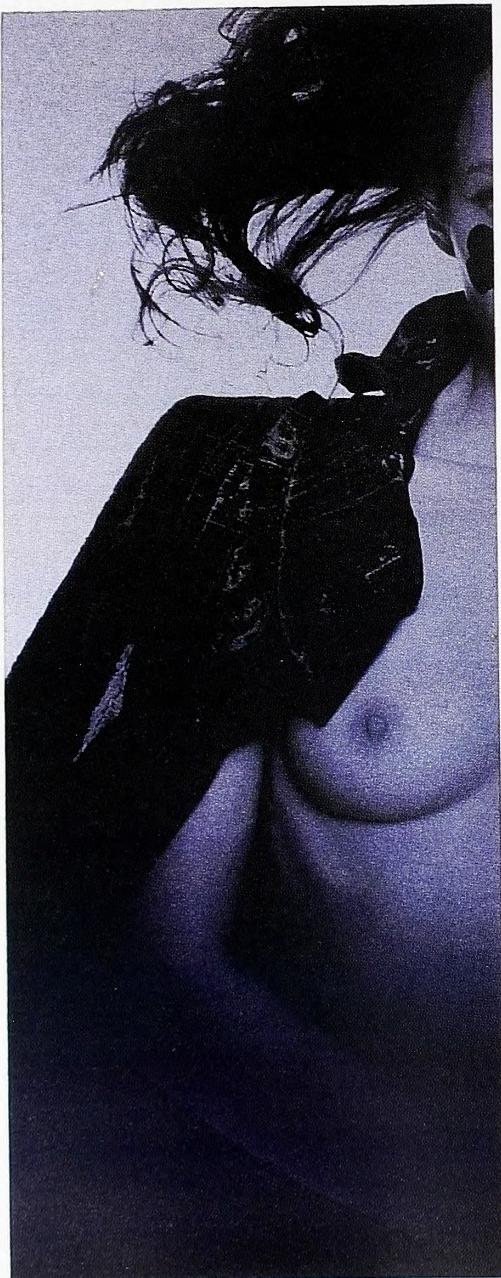
This was sent from a pilot aboard the USS John C. Stennis. He was the strike element lead on this attack, and received these pictures as a "thank you" from the U S Army controllers on the ground. It is an excellent example of a joint, combined arms operation. A Taliban/ al-Qaida armored vehicle (ex-Russian BMP) with troops embarked and riding on top is targeted by forward air controllers (FAC's) of the US Army, 4th Special Operations Group. A flight of two Navy F-14 Tomcats are called in by the Army FAC's and strike the vehicle nearly simultaneously with GBU-16 laser guided bombs. As a bonus, there is a nice secondary explosion in the middle of the road, towards the end of the set.

ACTUAL FILE FOOTAGE: US ARMY DECEMBER 10, 2001. 07:30



Marching Orders. 2002, Collage; **Paradise Lost II.** 2002, Collage
OPPOSITE **Job Satisfaction.** 2002, Collage





ATMOS 02



Towers 9/11 to Abu Ghraib. 2004, Multi-frame Juxtaposition of Appropriated Image Fragments Photocopied on Paper
OPPOSITE **Split.** 2002, Collage

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

WORKS ARE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

1950s:

PLATE 1

Self-Portrait. 1953. Oil on Canvas,
27 1/4 × 23 1/4 in. (9)

PLATE 2

Green Nude. 1956. Oil on Masonite,
22 7/8 × 53 3/8 in. (10)

PLATE 3

Ad Infinitum. 1957. Oil on Canvas,
34 3/8 × 50 3/4 in. (11)

PLATE 4

Untitled (Drawing produced in Hans Hofmann's class with assistance from Hofmann). 1957. Charcoal on Paper, 31 × 26 in. (13)

PLATE 5

Tuscany. 1958. Oil on Canvas,
31 × 36 3/4 in. (11)

1960s:

PLATE 6

Dogwood in Forest. 1961. Woodcut,
13 × 15 in. (25)

PLATE 7

Snow in Forest #2. 1960. Woodcut,
13 × 15 in. (26)

PLATE 8

Snow on Tree Tops (3/10). 1961. Woodcut,
21 1/4 × 23 3/4 in. (12)

PLATE 9

Fall Foliage. 1962. Woodcut,
15 1/2 × 12 7/8 in. (26)

PLATE 10

Spring Snow #2. 1962. Oil on Canvas,
55 × 40 3/4 in. (28, back cover—detail)

PLATE 11

Untitled (Three-panel Folding Screen).
c.1962. Oil on Panel, Each panel,
60 1/4 × 19 1/4 in.
Collection of Aurelia Gray Eller (29)

PLATE 12

Reflection. 1963. Woodcut,
15 1/2 × 13 in. (30)

PLATE 13

Blue Quartet. c.1965. Oil on Canvas,
39 × 39 in. (32, 33)

PLATE 14

Diffusion II, BG. 1966. Silkscreen,
15 1/2 × 15 1/4 in. (31)

PLATE 15

Yellow Plus. 1966. Acrylic on Canvas,
37 × 37 in. (5, back cover—detail)

PLATE 16

Wheel I, Red (artist's proof). 1967.
Silkscreen, 22 × 22 in.
(34, front cover—detail)

PLATE 17

Diffusion IV, WB. 1969. Silkscreen,
14 1/4 × 14 1/4 in. (14)

1970s:

PLATE 18

Curve XI, B&W (10/15). 1970. Silkscreen,
32 × 20 in.
Collection of Wake Forest University
Department of Physics (14)

PLATE 19

Dogwood. c.1974. Oil on Canvas,
53 × 57 in. (35)

PLATE 20

X-II Red. 1978. Silkscreen,
24 1/4 × 20 1/4 in. Courtesy of Lee Hansley
Gallery, Raleigh, NC

1980s:

PLATE 21

Ice and Winter Afternoon Glow. 1980.
Oil on Canvas,
39 1/8 × 49 in. (25)

PLATE 22

Artist by a Window (Martha Dunigan)
(from "Five Winston-Salem Printmakers"
series). 1982. Oil on Canvas,
74 × 44 in. (40)

PLATE 23

Self-Portrait on Drafting Stool
(from "Five Winston-Salem Printmakers"
series). 1982. Oil on Canvas,
74 × 44 in. (7)

PLATE 24

Barbara Millhouse, art lecturer. 1988.
Oil on Canvas with Collage,
52 × 26 in. (15)

PLATE 25

Charles Phillips, restoration architect. 1988.
Oil on Canvas with Collage,
76 × 50 in. (37)

PLATE 26

Marjorie Northup, museum educator. 1988.
Oil on Canvas with Collage,
63 × 40 1/2 in. (36)

1990s:

PLATE 27 (A-E)

Five Self-Portraits. 1990. Oil on Canvas,
Each 18×15 in. (2)

PLATE 28

Samaritan Guests (installation of portraits
of diners at a free soup kitchen operated
by Samaritan Ministries, Winston-Salem,
North Carolina). 1991. Oil on Linen with
Corrugated Cardboard, 56×109×10½ in.
On loan at the Wake Forest University,
Law School Worell Building (16, 38, 39)

PLATE 29

Color Cabinet. c.1992. Found Plastic
Objects in Painted Wood and Glass Cabinet,
84½×55×17½ in. (17, 41)

PLATE 30

Backgammon. 1996. Collage, 19×19 in. (46)

PLATE 31

Checkers. 1996. Collage,
19×19 in. (43, 44)

PLATE 32

Monopoly. 1996. Collage, 22×22 in.

PLATE 33

Self-Centered Game. 1996.
Collage, 18×18 in.

PLATE 34

Target. 1996. Collage (Mock-up for 82×82
in. Wallpaper Mural), 19½×19½ in.
(47, front cover-detail)

PLATE 35

Bougereau Revisited. 1999. Collage,
22¼×31 in. (42)

2000s:

PLATE 36

Return of the Sabines. 2000. Collage
Study for Commissioned Photocopy
Mural at SECCA,
19½×39 in. (19, 45)

PLATE 37

9/11. 2001. Collage,
16×16 in. (49)

PLATE 38

Homage to Shirin Neshat. 2001. Collage,
16×16 in. (48)

PLATE 39

Ireligne. 2001. Collage,
16×16 in. (21)

PLATE 40

Prayer Towers. 2001. Collage,
16×16 in. (48)

PLATE 41

The Temptation of St. Anthony. 2001. Collage,
20×16 in. (18)

PLATE 42

Bystanders IV. 2002. Collage,
20×16 in. (20)

PLATE 43

Job Satisfaction. 2002. Collage,
20×16 in. (50)

PLATE 44

Manhattan Project. 2002. Collage,
16×16 in. (48)

PLATE 45

Marching Orders. 2002. Collage,
20×16 in. (51)

PLATE 46

Paradise Lost II. 2002. Collage,
20×16 in. (51)

PLATE 47

Split. 2002. Collage,
16×16 in. (52)

PLATE 48

Search for the True Cross. 2004. Multi-frame
Juxtaposition of Appropriated Image
Fragments Photocopied on Paper,
80½×181 in. (27 frames each 20×16 in.)

PLATE 49

Towers 9/11 to Abu Ghraib. 2004. Multi-
frame Juxtaposition of Appropriated
Image Fragments Photocopied on Paper,
80½×212 in. (30 frames each 20×16 in.
and 5 frames each 20×16 in.). (53)

PLATE 50

**Model for Project at Turchin Center
for the Arts: *Earthly Delights in the 21st
Century: Bosch Revisited*.** Model: 2006/
Installation: 2007. Foamcore Board and
Photocopied Images on Paper,
50×30×30 ½ in. (22)

ANNE KESLER SHIELDS CHRONOLOGY

1932 Born in Winston-Salem, the only child of John “Jack” Kesler and Annie Mercer Kesler.

1930-1940s Encouraged by her parents to develop her seemingly innate aptitude for drawing and painting. Art-viewing trips to the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, and museums in New York and Washington, D.C., with her aunt Carolyn Mercer.

1947 Learns how to use a camera, sets up her own darkroom, begins to develop film and make photographic prints.

1950 Enrolls in Hollins College in Virginia. As an art major, her training follows a classical European model.

1952 Inspired by a modern-architecture seminar at Hollins, considers transferring to North Carolina State University to study architecture, but changes her mind after the dean of the university’s school of design tells her women don’t make good architects.

1954 Graduates from Hollins with a degree in art.

Travels to Europe for the summer with a student group.

Sets up a studio in her family home, where she makes silkscreen and woodcut prints, and commissioned charcoal portraits of children.

Begins experimenting with Modernist styles including Cubism and Surrealism.

1956 Joins other Winston-Salem artists to arrange a group exhibition at a local church—an effort leading to the establishment of Associated Artists of Winston-Salem.

Joins local artists and art patrons to establish the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Art, which will eventually become SECCA. In this

context, Shields is appointed to the gallery’s original board of directors for a five-year term.

Spends several weeks in summer at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, (Skowhegan, Maine) – an experience she counts as a personal breakthrough.

Begins taking graduate courses in the art department at Woman’s College, later to be renamed the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

1957 Studies during summer with Hans Hofmann at his School of Fine Arts, Provincetown, Massachusetts.

Late 1950s Teaches painting and drawing at Salem College for three semesters, then decides teaching takes too much time away from her art practice. Continues work toward her MFA degree.

Spends several weeks of summer 1958 sketching and looking at art and architecture in Italy and other parts of Europe.

1960 Awarded MFA degree from Woman’s College (now UNC-Greensboro).

In December she marries Howard Shields, a Wake Forest University physics professor.

1962 Joins Mary Goslen, Virginia Ingram, Susan Moore and Anne Carter Pollard to form the Five Winston-Salem Printmakers. Pooling talents, ideas, and other resources, they organize shows of their prints at galleries around the Southeast over the next 20 years. Martha Dunigan later joins the group and Goslen leaves.

1963-1969 Creates dot-patterned prints and paintings based on Josef Albers’ color theories. Associated American Artists Gallery in New York begins representing and showing these works, bringing national attention.

1965-1971 Gives birth to her three children—Carolyn, Burton and John.

Early 1970s Creates transitional works including line drawings of nude models and paintings of patterns derived from leaf shapes. She also begins experimenting with geometric approaches to the line, creating hard-edged, sharp-angled drawings and prints.

1975 Commissioned by the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County to design a 1,650-square-foot mural painted on a centrally located building in downtown Winston-Salem.

1978-79 Lives in a rented house in Branford, Connecticut, with her family while her husband serves as a visiting professor of physics at Yale University.

Makes a series of paintings of Long Island Sound viewed from her bedroom window.

early 1980s Paints portraits exclusively after deciding to make it her focus for five years (she later sheds the time limitation and extends the project into the early 1990s).

Moves studio into a new space on Burke Street in Winston-Salem’s West End.

1987 Awarded fellowship from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts (VCCA) near Amherst, Virginia, where she spends several weeks painting two-hour “quick portraits” of other resident artists.

1988 Develops “portrait collage” technique, juxtaposing portraits with collage elements.

Joins Artworks, the artists’ cooperative that had opened a gallery space in downtown Winston-Salem in 1984.

1989 Exhibits “Portrait Collages” at Artworks Gallery. Most of the subjects are Winston-Salem residents involved in the arts and education.

- 1990** Paints quick portraits of other resident artists at VCCA, where she makes her third visit in the summer, and all 20 members of Artworks (including herself). The latter group of portraits is intended for exhibition as an installation titled *Artworkers*.
- 1991** Paints quick portraits of 21 homeless individuals at a Winston-Salem soup kitchen, presented in cardboard boxes adjoined in a grid to form the installation, *Samaritan Guests*.
Paints quick portraits of 19 residents of Winston-Salem's Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community. The resultant installation, *At the Health Care Center*, is exhibited at Artworks Gallery, alongside *Samaritan Guests*, Shields' artists' portraits from VCCA, and *Artworkers*.
Begins work on *Women of Letters: A Group Portrait of North Carolina Writers*, a 32-portrait installation for a women's literary conference in Winston-Salem. The piece is completed in time to be unveiled at the conference in March 1992.
- 1994** In "Design and Desire," a solo show at Artworks Gallery, she introduces new body of work consisting of large-scale, collage-format photocopy installations. Most employ images of seductively posed women to raise questions about beauty, sexuality and the exploitation of women in commercial imagery and art history.
- 1995** For "Design and Desire II," Shields wraps the atrium columns in Charlotte's Spirit Square with life-size photocopy images of goddesses as portrayed in classical statuary and enlarged fashion photos of "statuesque" women.
Artworks Gallery exhibits her "Pen-Ups: A Brief History of Nude Painting," combining elements of drawing and collage with a list of printed questions.
- 1996** In her solo wallpaper installation *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, at Artworks Gallery, Shields juxtaposes contemporary photos of celebrities, fashion models, professional sports heroes and advertisements for designer goods with details from Hieronymus Bosch's proto-surrealist triptych of the same title.
Another Bosch-derived installation, *Carousel: A March of Folly*, appears in "Amusements": a solo show at Long Island University's Salena Gallery, Brooklyn, New York.
- Creates *Cross Purposes*, a charged assemblage in which a plastic figurine of a voluptuous blond woman in a black bikini is affixed to a black wooden cross.
- 1998** *Cross Purposes* is shown at Artworks Gallery, prompting a few viewers to complain the work is sacrilegious.
- 2000** Creates *Return of the Sabines*, a site-specific installation in SECCA's Overlook Gallery—a grid of rectangles centered on a fragmented reproduction of Jacques Louis David's *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* (1799).
- 2001** Begins series of small photo-collages employing appropriated imagery in response to the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and related geopolitical developments, establishing the major themes for her work through most of the decade
- 2002** Exhibits 9/11-themed collages in a group exhibition at Artworks Gallery.
First large-scale photocopy installation to deal with these events exhibited at Salem College' Fine Arts Center, Winston-Salem.
- 2003** Following U.S. invasion of Iraq, Shields uses WTC towers' silhouettes as visual devices in photocopy installation *Negative Spaces*, at Artworks Gallery.
- 2004** Devises modular format for presenting appropriated-image pieces made of framed, uniform-size panels, first employed in her series "Ambiguities," which travels to four galleries in the Southeast.
- 2005** Resumes use of wallpapering technique for her next installation projects, including *Constant Battles* (Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2005); *View from the Towers*, (Hollins University, 2006), *Earthly Delights in the 21st Century: Bosch Revisited* (Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, Appalachian State University, 2007), and *Boundaries*, (Waterworks Visual Arts Center, Salisbury, North Carolina, 2008).
- 2009** Returns to modular-frame format for installation *Ambiguities II*, a continuous photocopy mural spread across three walls at Artworks Gallery.
- 2010** Revisits experiments with geometric abstraction and color relationships in a site-specific piece commissioned for the Hanesbrands Theater in Winston-Salem's new Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts. The work is composed of staggered red and gray vertical stripes painted on two corrugated-steel fire doors near the seating areas.
- 2011** Creates 12 wallpaper "Diptychs" at Artworks Gallery, each pairing a reproduction of a painting from Winston-Salem's Reynolda House collection with a contemporary photograph.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A career retrospective offers the unique opportunity to reflect on the past, meditate upon the present, and imagine the future. No more worthy, or compelling a subject for such a turn through history could there be than Anne Kesler Shields. We give immense credit and thanks to Anne—for not only the honor of presenting this well-deserved retrospective at SECCA, but for the lifetime of work it reflects. Shields has been a longstanding fixture in the life and growth of art in Winston-Salem, and an inspiration to so many across the cultural spectrum of the southeast. Her vitality, curiosity and ambition have only increased with age—provoking necessary dialogues, giving voice to women in art and art history, and providing a model for generations to follow. This look back upon her kaleidoscopic career is in no way an end, but another new beginning for an artist that continues to work in perpetual motion.

Every exhibition needs a good architect, and sincere gratitude must be given to curator, critic, writer and fervent arts activist Tom Patterson for initiating and guiding this retrospective. As a respected observer of Winston-Salem's art scene for over two decades, his words, voice and vision have equally shaped and reflected the ecology we live today. He pushes this city to want and be more in its artistic constitution, and has been a long time supporter of what Shields has brought to a tapestry we collectively live and weave. We thank him for his vision, his persistence, for crafting the most comprehensive essay on Shields' life and work to date, and for shining a spotlight on her work across this city. In that regard, we also wish to thank Paul Bright and The Hanes Art Gallery at Wake Forest University, as well as Kim Varnadoe and the Salem College Fine Art Center Galleries for joining SECCA in a city-wide celebration of Shields' voluminous production (with more work still to spare!).

Extending further appreciation to the community, this exhibition—and the book you hold in your hands—would not have been possible without the contributions of many to this worthy cause. The individual donor names are listed on accompanying pages of this catalog, but as a whole, we offer heartfelt thanks to Anne's extended family of friends, classmates, collectors, colleagues and supporters. If an artist is measured by those whose lives she/he has touched through art, Shields' list is too long to keep any sort of count. To this end, we thank her husband Howard and her children for all their assistance and support, as well as her studio assistant Holly Wilbur for bravely sorting through piles upon piles of Anne's prodigious archive to assemble the checklist. Aurelia Gray Eller, Lee Hansley

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This community-supported catalog is also the product of an equally generous, and talented pair of artists behind the scenes. Woodie Anderson (aka Woodsherry) enthusiastically congregates vintage aesthetics and rock attitude to design a book that bristles with energy. We are indebted to her for providing a welcome lift out of a tight spot, and being so gracious under tight timelines. Jason Dowdle has photographed the work with sensitivity and sophistication, treating each piece with as much care as if they were his own. We also wish to thank Jim Conrad and the Sun Printing Company for being so attentive, conscientious, and able to realize our wishes for a catalog that will brighten many bookshelves in Winston-Salem and beyond.

The exhibition itself has been collectively realized by a dedicated SECCA staff and Foundation board. Mary Beth Johnson (Director of Development) has been especially integral in coordinating successful fundraising efforts, serving as a liaison for the many supporters of this show, and propelling it into the hearts and minds of many. Cliff Dossel (Installation Manager & Registrar), Mark Graves (Facilities Manager & Security Chief) and CJ Milam (Installation Assistant) braved the heat, road and abundant checklist to gather work from across the state, and install it all with poise and professionalism. Program Assistant Kristin Bell provided her artistic sensibility to re-install the components of *Color Cabinet*, as well as to each and every label. Mark Leach (Executive Director) and Karin Burnette (Director of Finance & Operations) provided able guidance throughout, while Ellen Wallace (Marketing and PR Manager) worked closely with our friends at Fifth Letter design to promote the show through cards, print and social media. Lynn Jessup (Executive Assistant) and Amy Dorman (Weekend Receptionist) charmingly begin every visit to SECCA with a smile, while Todd Blackwell (Facilities Assistant) keeps everything in order and looking its best.

A final thanks to all the patrons, donors, members, volunteers and visitors that meet SECCA at the intersection of art and you. SECCA is an affiliate of the North Carolina Museum of Art, a division of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. SECCA is also a funded partner of the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, and receives generous support from the James G. Hanes Foundation.

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